SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN TRANSITION:
KYRGYZSTANI LANGUAGE POLICIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Since 1991, the Central Asian state of Kyrgyzstan has chosen a variety of legal and institutional approaches, pulling from both the assimilationist and multiculturalist toolkits, in attempt to transition from Soviet Union membership, to an independent, nationally coherent and institutionally inclusive statehood. While state policies have struggled to simultaneously balance many interrelated goals, language continues to cross-cut the entire nation-building project and exercise its symbolic power on all policy formulations.

This paper takes a critical approach to assessing the interplay between nation-building projects and language policy formulations and outcomes. Focusing on the obstacles to educational reform in Kyrgyzstan's transitional context, linguistic divisions at all level of education are explored through the conceptual lens of linguistic capital. Policies seeking to address the distribution of this capital are constrained by the upheaval of transition, low state capacity, and rural/urban cleavages. Because of these obstacles and the social reproduction they evoke, reform and relapse of multilingual educational policies in Kyrgyzstan exacerbate social stratification along linguistic, class, and regional cleavages.

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INTRODUCTION

«Тилдин тагдыры - элдин тагдыры.» - Кыргыз макал-лакап
"The fate of the language is the fate of the nation." - Kyrgyz proverb

The fate of the nation, or at least as the concept fits into transitional nation-building, certainly relies on language to express its aims, challenges, and mechanisms. If we look closer at this relationship to understand the acute role of language policies in nation-building, we have to also understand the reciprocal role of nation-building in language policies. This dialectic sets the tone for the critique to follow and allows for a nuanced analysis of Kyrgyzstan's state language policies in education.

Essentially, "while overt discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, and regional or class background is generally no longer acceptable [...], the marginalizing of some groups and the privileging of other continues on the basis of language, a discrimination that is justified by an ideology that naturalizes a linguistic standard."[1] This essay will examine who, how, and why this privileging occurred in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, within its linguistic context. If multilingual policies are intended to reduce social stratification, where are the missteps produced? In other words, multilingual societies face discrete and interrelated obstacles under the present conditions, particularly the post-Soviet transitional realities and through the domain of educational reform. Here I will contextualize those obstacles within a targeted theoretical framework to explain their complex resonance.

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1   Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 23.

Literature Review

Much has been written on Soviet language policies, addressing the ethnolinguistic dynamics, policy chronology, and various interrelated political events. These historical backgrounds will be drawn upon in the analysis, premiere among them the work of Lenore Grenoble, who addresses the tensions between policies aimed at furthering and even inventing linguistic groups, and those striving to maintain an all-encompassing Soviet identity.[2] Empirical data from within the Soviet Union has also been used to systematically assess the progression of official language policies over time and in differing geographies.[3] These tensions still linger into the present language policy reality where Kyrgyzstan stands today.

Broad comparative analyses of post-Soviet successor states have contributed greatly to the evolution of these studies into the present contexts. Landau and Kellner-Heinkele address the continuation of state policy and practice utilizing both titular and Russian languages as a part of their nation-building processes.[4] Of all the cases where these language dynamics are pertinent, the most compelling and critical academic texts have been written about Kazakhstan. Bhavna Dave is able to explore the 'nationalizing state,' while taking a postcolonial lens, and succeeds in outlining the paradoxical language policy development of Kazakhstan.[5]

Works focusing specifically on Kyrgyzstan are less frequent and less comprehensive. Alan DeYoung and colleagues have produced substantial ethnographic

2   Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union.*
3   Anderson and Silver, "Equality, Efficiency, and Politics in Soviet Bilingual Education Policy."
4   Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language in the ex-Soviet Muslim States*.
5   Dave, *Kazakhstan.*

studies on secondary schooling in rural areas that illuminate how individual actors, particularly teachers, administrators, and students, are navigating the post-Soviet transition.[6] These cases studies provide credible background to my analysis of higher education access by showing the disaggregated primary and secondary educational experiences throughout the country. Yet another ethnographic study, which has contributed to the breadth of knowledge on Kyrgyzstan's education system, was conducted at the university level by Britta Korth. She seeks to capture the dynamics between Kyrgyz and Russian languages in multiple universities, focusing primarily on language use and quality of instruction.[7] The several other works dedicated to this language issue in the Kyrgyzstani context are heavily sociolinguistic or political in nature, but few bridge the gap between politics and the sociology of language.

Methodologically, I seek to bridge the aforementioned gap between these sophisticated micro-analyses on secondary and higher education, as this intersection holds the key for addressing social mobility and reproduction. Furthermore, this essay is distinct in its commitment to focusing on the reproduction of obstacles to inclusivity in a multilingual society. Theoretically, this essay derives inspiration from the postcolonial approach of Bhavna Dave and applies critical theories to the interaction of language policies and education in Kyrgyzstan.

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6 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?*
7 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian.*

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Theoretical Tools

This paper will employ a critical theory of language policy analysis, utilizing a conceptual dialectic between reform and relapse.[8] The dual processes of de-Russification and Kyrgyzization similarly rely on this dialectical relationship. De-Russification refers to the deployment of policies aimed at removing or reducing the influence of Russian language, cultural symbols, and political pressure (from the Russian Federation or other Russophone external actors) in the Kyrgyzstani public sphere, especially education. Kyrgyzization refers to the, sometimes parallel, process of promoting the influence of Kyrgyz language, cultural symbols, and ethnically-framed political autonomy in the Kyrgyzstani public sphere.

Also, derived from critical language policy analysis, this paper considers language policy and social stratification to be mutually constituitive of one another.[9] Thus, language policy instigates and is instigated by social stratification, which is to be defined, for the purposes of this paper, as "systematic differences between certain institutions or people, and that these differentiated forms have been ranked in status or prestige."[10] Therefore, an assumption of this analysis is that social stratification and inequalities do exist and are pervasive in the education system. Using Foucault's theories on hidden discourse, any guise of neutrality in educational reform is eliminated to allow for field-level analysis of the interconnected and interdependent inequalities of education.[11]

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8   Ciscel, "Reform and Relapse in Bilingual Policy in Moldova."
9   Cooper, *Language Planning and Social Change.*
10 Barber, *Social Stratification,*1-3.
11 Foucault, "The Discourse on Language." Roth, "Of What Help Is He?" and McDonough and Fann, "The Study of Inequality."

In order to more accurately describe the interplay of language and education in these inequalities, Bourdieu's conceptualization of both as tools of social reproduction will be the primary theoretical approach of this analysis.[12] Large amounts of capital, in all its manifestations, are exchanged and converted as they reproduce elite dominance. In applying Bourdieu's theory to increasingly specific circumstances, we arrive at a point where linguistic capital is identified as a crucial component of elite reproduction. It is this sociolinguistic skill-set that symbolically gains predominance over ethnicity or nationality at points of access to education.[13] However, the tensions of post-Soviet transitional nation-building produce an implicit reconfiguration of all the capitals, linguistic included, that generates an unforeseen redistribution of societal values and, thus, capital.

In order to further clarify the methodology and conceptual terms of this paper, it is necessary to address notions of titular nationality and language. I will use the Soviet-preferred term 'nationality' when discussing policies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), but otherwise I prefer 'ethnicity,' for the sake of distinguishing it from citizenship. Nonetheless, accounts of ethnic Kyrgyz or ethnic Russians refer only to those ascriptively categorized as such on their obligatory identity documents, despite some individuals' propensity to ethnically self-identify differently.

'Titular' is yet another Soviet term that requires careful consideration and the exposition of caveats. When combined with 'nationality,' there is an implied territorial congruence between an ethnicity and the state that is owned by it. 'Titular language'

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12 Bourdieu and Passerson, *Reproduction in education, society and culture.*
13 Bourdieu, *Reproduction in Education*, 80.

evokes further assumptions of congruence, this time between a language and an ethnicity, which prompts me to problematize the term as such. A conceptual inquiry to be explored as a part of that problem is the way 'titular' reifies group boundaries and fuels opposition to civic nation-building efforts. In order to avoid methodological nationalism, I will avoid the use of this term until the conclusion, when this problem will by cumulatively assessed.

Methodology

For further elucidation, 'nation-building' is oft referred to in this essay, where ideological, linguistic, and educational reforms are portrayed as tools of this project. I intend to conceptualize 'nation-building,' borrowing from Rogers Brubaker, with "nationhood and nationality as institutionalized cultural and political forms, not about nations as concrete collectivities."[14] Furthermore, nation-building is a processual action with dynamic aims and mechanisms often characterized by their fluctuations.

As an important caveat, the omission of the role of ethnic Uzbek minority-rights claims, Uzbek language, and other fundamental interethnic discourses was not undertaken without extensive consideration. Because of recent, ethnically-framed conflicts in Southern Kyrgyzstan, this question remains pertinent, but shall be reserved for a different, forth-coming analysis.

A brief, yet comprehensive, historical background begins this paper by broadly contextualizing the historical circumstances, ideological underpinnings, and chronology of Soviet nationalities and language policies. Also in this section, language policy

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14 Brubaker, "Nationhood and the national question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia," 48.

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theoretical tools are reviewed and critical policy analysis is explicitly outlined.

The second chapter is entirely dedicated to the challenges posed by the post-Soviet transition, focusing first on general issues to out-migration, discourse, and capacity. Then, the analysis moves to the educational transformation undertaken during transition. This transformation is divided into its institutional and content-related aspects. Also in this section, the primary theoretical tools for understanding educational reform are presented.

The third chapter approaches the interrelated fields of education in Kyrgyzstan, while highlighting linguistic capital. The linguistic divisions in primary, secondary, and higher education are described and several empirical details of the maintenance of elite dominance are explored, including funding, corruption, and testing.

Finally, in this essay's conclusion, the analyses of policy, language, and education are merged to probe at larger questions of 'titular' language, the gap between policy aims and outcomes, and the dynamics of secondary and higher education institutions. Some additional speculations are explored on the premise of current proposed reforms to the linguistic content of obligatory secondary school exit-exams. Through these intertwined explorations, the obstacles intrinsic to educational reform in the transitional context are identified as they stand in opposition to outcomes characterized by reduced social stratification.

This paper chiefly assesses the interplay between nation-building projects and language policies. Focusing on the obstacles to linguistic and educational reform in Kyrgyzstan's transitional context, linguistic divisions at all levels of education are

explored through the conceptual lens of linguistic capital. Policies seeking to address the distribution of this capital are constrained by the upheaval of transition, low state capacity, and rural/urban cleavages. Because of these obstacles and the social reproduction they evoke, reform and relapse of multilingual educational policies in Kyrgyzstan continue exacerbate social stratification along linguistic, class, and regional cleavages.

CHAPTER 1: Historical Background

If this paper is to adequately address ideological and policy-related factors that stand as obstacles to integration and aggravate stratification, historical contextualization is preeminent. The evolution of Soviet nationalities and linguistic policies underwent waves of reform and relapse as actors reified and adapted both new and existing categories. This chapter maps these reforms and relapses and then offers a theoretical framework for understanding their production and processes.

1.1. Soviet Union

Independence in December 1991 created a new space for the enactment of Kyrgyzstani state power, but this space nonetheless carried the great burden of the Soviet legacy. Not to be over estimated, the following section explores some key developments in the nationalities and linguistic policies of the Soviet Union (USSR) during the time period (1919-1991) that the territory currently known as Kyrgyzstan was part of the union. The influence of these policies on the post-independence and present-day language attitudes and policies is also addressed here.

1.1.1. Nationalities Policies

1.1.1.1. Territorially Defined Nations

Soviet ethnographers took care to present their national-territorial delimitation as a supremely progressive policy.[15] The rhetoric used was predominantly focused on national self-determination, however national consciousness was more accurately

15 Hirsch, "Toward an Empire of Nations," 202.

imposed than self-determined. Soviet nationalities policies in the republics were inspired by the notion of an ideal amount of nationalism that a group of people are supposed to possess. In cases where too much nationalism was evident, these movements were actively suppressed. In cases where the authorities observed less nationalism, their policies sought to develop it through linguistic and cultural production.[16]

'Kyrgyz' was declared a distinct nationality, with a lower-level of nationalism than some neighboring categories, and the territory was therefore subject to increased national development. And as quickly as the policy makers had embedded the language of nationality within the system, people living in the different republics began to use this language to make their claims on the government.[17] Nation-building did not passively happen to the people of any republic, therefore, the local contribution to reifying and adapting nationality policies must be highlighted.

In summary, the USSR can be conceptualized as a federal multi-national state, with nations tied directly to territory and to language. Soviet leadership, including Lenin and Stalin, tied the concept of nation to state and wanted to harness the power of 'nation' as opposed to diffuse it.[18] Under these pretenses, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), previously an Autonomous Oblast with the Russian SSR, was established in 1936 as a territory for those who were defined by Kyrgyz language and culture. Thereafter fueled by Soviet ethnographic imposition and motivated to carve their own role in the development of Kyrgyz language and nationhood, local elites initiated their involvement in policy making.

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16 Hirsch, "Toward and Empire of Nations," 211.
17 Ibid., 216.
18 Smith, "The Tenacity of Forms," 109.

1.1.1.2. Ascriptive Ethnic Categorization

Before moving any further in the analysis, it is critical to provide additional context for the mechanisms with which Soviet nationalities policies were supported. The USSR first introduced internal passports in 1932 in what Francine Hirsch described as "a spectacular effort to make sense of the USSR's mosaic of peoples."[19] This process, of which many now conceive as blatant social engineering, served to determine which ethnicities would be included on official census lists, which groups were to be merged with neighboring or related groups, and which categories should be eliminated altogether.[20] While this practice blatantly excluded and favored some categories, the implications of which will not be speculated on here, codification also had wider implications on those whose groups were actually included. Though these groups were not explicitly excluded from state recognition, the individual members were only allowed recognition of unitary, ascriptive, and bounded groupness.

If the documents were of a social engineering nature at their inception, it is important to consider how and where boundary maintenance was used throughout the evolution of practices. Ascriptive categorization in Soviet passports was particularly relevant at the republican level, where the federation's constitutive states linked social mobility to ascribed ethnicity. Ascriptive ethnicity and the controversy surrounding its implications is often referred to as the fifth point (*piati punkt*) as it is the fifth ascriptive category listed on the internal Soviet passport following surname, name, patronymic, and birth date/place.[21] More than merely a point on a document, an individual's passport

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19 Hirsch, "The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress," 255.
20 Simonsen, "Inheriting the Soviet Policy Toolbox," 1070.
21 Ibid., 1069.

ethnicity was a legal tool used to favor certain peoples over others in access to higher education and employment within the borders of their republic.[22] The social privilege and increased access attached to the state's ascriptive categories helped to create localized elites who themselves sought to reify boundary maintenance and divisions throughout the evolution of its practices.

Divisiveness would be minimal if such ascriptive passport categorization did not constantly interact with ethnic self-identification, which is perceived as much closer to reality on the individual level. Even renowned Soviet ethnographers, like Viktor Kozlov for example, noted that this method of ethnic categorization distorted and obscured reality and was unable to capture processes like integration and re-identification.[23] He criticized the system further, "in conducting the censuses of population, nationality is determined by the self-definition of the respondent, but the influence of the inscription of ethnic affiliation in the passport is evidently determining in the predominant majority of cases."[24] For Kozlov as a social scientist, state categorization's dominance over self-identification was fundamentally inaccurate, regardless of its political role in boundary maintenance.

Despite its inaccuracy, these two concepts became cognitively linked in the minds of many who were forced to adhere to Soviet nationalities policies. Additionally, a direct link between nationality and mother tongue was presumed and continues to be a pervasive preconception in present-day Kyrgyzstan, where 70 and 61 percent, of

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22 Brubaker, "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia," 53.
23 Kozlov, *The Peoples of the Soviet Union,* 191.
24 Anderson and Silver, "Equality, Efficiency, and Politics in Soviet Bilingual Education Policy," 464

ethnically self-identified Kyrgyz and Russian respectively, residents hold this belief.[25] When language is considered in close correlation with nationality by such large segments of the population, the implications of Soviet nationalities policies become wider and more determinant for the present analysis.

1.1.1.2. 'Affirmative Action Empire' through Korenizatsiia

The multinational character of the Soviet Union was marked by the aforementioned, ascriptive demarcations, which were often used as tools to justify positive action toward non-Russian populations. This process characterized the regimes balancing act of core-periphery relations and sought to undermine many potential rebellions, subsequently earning it the description of 'affirmative action empire.' Martin describes the USSR in its "simultaneous embrace of both an extraterritorial personal definition of nationality and a territorial one" as the unique dilemma.[26] In its attempt to be 'nationalist in form, socialist in content,' Soviet leaders developed policies to promote certain national developments over others.

This unique characteristic of Soviet nation-building causes much confusion about the nature of Soviet rule, but in reviewing the archival material (*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*), Hirsch aptly identifies the motives and mechanisms of nationality-based affirmative action. She refuses to characterize Soviet rule as 'divide and conquer,' and, in doing so, makes room for more nuanced analytical scholarship.[27] Here is where it

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25 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 220.
26 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire, 72*
27 Hirsch, "Toward an Empire of Nations," 202.

is clear that in the 1920's, the Soviet project of nation-building was being undertaken in both the core and periphery, with the peripheral mechanism emerging into a process referred to as *korenizatsiia*, primarily focused on promoting national languages and national elites.[28]

While Lenin used his rhetoric of national self-determination to advocate for lofty goals like liberation, later Soviet leaders became entrenched in the instrumentality of the USSR's constituent nations. Stalin and his contemporaries saw "native cadres, who understood the way of life, customs, and habits of the local population," as the key to making Soviet power appear indigenous. For this reason, the central power systematically promoted the formation of national territories, often for minorities as opposed to majorities, staffed by national elites.[29]

By looking at this elite entitlement, Bhavna Dave highlights the contradictions within *korenizatsiia*.

> The Soviet state's promotion of progress and parity inculcated a sense of entitlements for positions and privileges within their own republic among the [elite] strata, which eventually subverted the socialist state's aim to attaining their loyalty through a promise of material well-being. [All this while simultaneously retaining] a posture of subalternity and claim[ing] symbolic legitimacy as intermediaries between their native ethnic constituencies and Moscow.[30]

Despite its vast distance from the Soviet center, approximately 3,000 kilometers from Moscow, the Kyrgyz SSR had limited autonomy within the USSR. The Central Asian region, in particular, is notable in its extensive intervention, by appointing only those

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28 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire, 10.*
29 Ibid*., 12-13.*
30 Dave, *Kazakhstan, 161.*

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from Moscow to hold the highest positions in the Kyrgyz SSR governmental bodies. However, the above referenced intermediaries were critical in the process of *korenizatsiia* and became increasingly relevant as nation-building took on a new meaning in the 1990s and 2000s.

1.1.2. Language Policies

1.1.2.1. Promotion of the Kyrgyz Language

Calls for the preservation and promotion of Kyrgyz language, via 'affirmative action' as discussed earlier, were quite decisively based on primordial understandings of the nation.[31] Within the framework of Soviet nationalities policy, the Kyrgyz nation needed to advance its distinct language for its development into its presumed place among the Soviet nationalities. Because there were virtually no public schools before the Russian imperial presence in the area, formalizing education filled a vacuum that easily played a prominent role in nation-building efforts.[32] The first Kyrgyz language instruction school opened in 1926, with grammar of the Kyrgyz language published first in 1927, and compulsory school attendance introduced in 1930.[33] Even this early on, it can be noted that these interventions had a strong influence on people's linguistic uses and attitudes.

An 1897 survey conducted by Russian imperial representatives, revealed low literacy rates (0.8%) among the nomadic people inhabiting present day Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.[34] Kyrgyz language development was pursued partly in an effort to increase

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31 Dave, "Shrinking Reach of the State?," 130.
32 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?*, 3.
33 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian*, 133.
34 Ibid., 67.

literacy. Both language planning and literature of the written Kyrgyz language, which was primarily transferred orally beforehand, was undertaken by Soviet language planners, away from its initial Arabic script, through Latin and then finally Cyrillic.[35] By 1939, literacy was rising throughout the Union, but particularly in the Kyrgyz SSR where rates were up to eighty percent in urban areas and just below seventy percent rurally.[36]

In 1936, the USSR Constitution was amended to guarantee schooling to all citizens in their native language, via Article 121, chapter 2, section 1.[37] This Union-wide policy was implemented concomitantly with several important policies focused on the status of the Russian language. Foremost among these policy developments were the transfer of Kyrgyz writing into Cyrillic script in 1937, Russian language's status as a mandatory school subject in 1938, and the publishing of the first Russian-Kyrgyz dictionary in 1944.[38] These parallel developments mark the first steps towards the institutionalization of bilingualism in the Kyrgyz SSR.

1.1.2.2. Bilingual Education Policies

By the time Krushchev took the helm of the USSR, his notion of Russian as a 'second mother tongue[39] had already taken hold in many of the republics, with Kyrgyzstan as no exception. Aside from the aforementioned script changes, dictionary publications, and literature promotions, the central authorities in Moscow were unable to supply the republics with sufficient resources to enact effective bilingual educational

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35 Dave, "Shrinking Reach of the State?," 126.
36 Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union,* 156.
37 Ibid., 59.
38 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian*, 133.
39 Ibid., 85.

opportunities. However, Krushchev's Union-wide educational reforms of 1958-59 promoted the status of the Russian language by increasing the number of Russian-language schools.[40] These schools quickly became sites of high investment from the center as a means of expanding literacy and ideology.

In some contexts, using the Ukrainian example, advocating for bilingualism was and is still seen as a mere ruse to conceal Russification.[41] This view is also common among critics of bilingual education in Kyrgyzstan, especially in the cases where rhetoric is not backed by sufficient resources to fulfill promises of bilingualism. It is important to note that "Russification did not set in with one particular event or person, but that subliminal Russification tendencies always carry imperial connotations."[42] These imperial connotations were particularly relevant towards the end of the Soviet rule, as the role of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan reached a point of heightened contestation.

1.1.2.2.1. Language of Friendship and Cooperation

In 1979, the Russian language was proclaimed the 'language of friendship and cooperation of the peoples of the USSR.'[43] With Russian as the officially declared lingua franca, Russian-speakers were faced with little to no incentive for learning the official languages of the republics, including Kyrgyz.[44] This declaration further contributed to the specific type of diglossia, where Russian served as the high language and the republic languages, like Kyrgyz, were low. Diglossia is a an important sociolinguistic concept

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40 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian*, 91.
41 Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongue*, 9.
42 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian*, 69.
43 Grenoble, *Language Policy of the Soviet Union,* 88.
44 Dave, *Kazakhstan,* 101.

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used to describe developments distinct from bilingualism, where two languages are used side by side with marked differences in status. The low language (L) is most often used in informal situations, while the high language (H) is considered more beautiful, more logical, and better able to express complex ideas.[45] This concept is important here for the understanding of the stratified social reality that instigates and is instigated by state language policies.

1.1.2.2.2. Kyrgyz Language Law

Still, Russian was not declared the official language of the Soviet Union until April 1990. Of course, it acted as a de facto official language for many years before that, but this reactionary declaration was prompted by legislation in the republics that institutionalized their local languages, like that of the 1989 Kyrgyz Language Law.[46]

Enacted just shortly before independence, the Kyrgyz Language Law of 1989 reflected a certain amount of optimism about the autonomy emerging throughout the USSR as a product of *perestroika*. Many of the ruling elite believed in "Kyrgyz [as] a means of ethnic solidarity and unity and a people's common national property, reflecting the degree of cultural development, and that it should completely satisfy people's communicative needs, resolving (self-) contradictions and aiding sovereignty."[47] Whether or not this law could have satisfied these purported needs remains unknown as the country underwent significant shifts in leadership, ideology, and national development

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45 Ferguson, "Diglossia," 233, 348.
46 Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues,* 93.
47 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language, and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 211.

upon independence in 1991, which forced nation-building efforts to face remarkable

tensions and uneasy negotiations of power-sharing. At this point, most fundamentally,

broader choices were available from nationality and language policy toolkits amidst,

however, the extensive influence of the Soviet legacy.

1.1.2.3. Language Policy Theoretical Tools

1.1.2.3.1. Locating the Discourses on Language Diversity

This exploration of Kyrgyzstani linguistic policies and their corresponding

societal impacts is reliant on identifying the critical points at which approaches intersect.

Francois Grin seeks to delineate approaches before allowing for their compatibility. He

notes that normative political theory approaches to language diversity in society are

located 'upstream' in evaluating how language policy and use should be in society. On

the other hand, policy analysis approaches are situated 'downstream from' other

approaches in that they look at how society's goal can be reached, valuing different

methods for reaching these goals more than others. Abstaining from any judgment on the

matter, policy analysis looks at the ways in which policies increase or decrease 'welfare'

in order to compare different ways of reaching certain goals.[48] In that same volume, Will

Kymlicka asserts aspects of his influential, liberal multiculturalist model, with which

Grin seeks to combine, more practical, policy analysis to develop an integrated

framework.

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48 Kymlicka and Grin, "Assessing the Politics of Diversity in Transition Countries," 16.

1.1.2.3.2. Rights-based Approaches

Kymlicka, together with Alan Patten, contribute to the ongoing normative debate among political theorists on the issue of language rights.[49] Attempts at integrated frameworks like these resulted in the emergence of a field of Linguistic Human Rights (LHR) in consideration of issues like language ecology and migration trends.[50] Implicit assumptions of LHR approaches include: singular language imposition by the state is not a neutral act, state language is a tool for gaining access to state resources and services, and the subsequent privileges lie in the hands of those whose primary language is the state language.[51] LHR scholars link this privilege to fundamental human rights. I take a stance of problematizing rights-based discourses, but will continue to outline some critiques in order to explicate the evolution of language policy analysis.

Prominent in the field of LHR is the specific contextualization of linguistic human right as a sub-set of human rights and the articulation of related, universalizing principles. These proponents undermine the myth that state monolingualism is beneficial for society economically or even in terms of national unity and territorial integrity. This rights-based approach extends to even finding great utility in the ability of minority languages to foster a more egalitarian society.[52] Following this logic, the more languages given state recognition and space to be used in economic, political, and social activities, the closer diverse citizenries get to achieving equality of linguistic opportunity.

Debates on LHR revolve around three related, yet distinct, points of departure:

49 Kymlicka and Patten, *Language Rights and Political Theory.*
50 Kymlicka and Grin, "Assessing the Politics of Diversity in Transition Countries," 18.
51 De Varennes, *Language, Minorities and Human Rights.*
52 Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, *Linguistic Human Rights.*

historical inevitability, essentialism, and mobility.[53] Inevitability is most often critiqued

by the realist arguments of those who advocate linguistic modernization, usually in the

direction of the majority world languages.[54] Here, LHR advocacy for the maintenance of

minority languages is characterized as an overly romantic project, which will be fruitless

over time. Essentialism can be found in LHR scholars who putatively and

unquestioningly link language and identity in order to justify claims to linguistic rights.[55]

Critics, without arguing for the abject unimportance of language, question this link by

highlighting situational patterns of language use, including notable incidences of

hybridity and the variant phenomena of individuals not using language as a primary self-

identifier. Furthermore, essentialism remains a part of the general critique of LHR, which

is often also directed at all multiculturalist policies, in that they "unnecessarily destabilize

social and political contexts, by highlighting difference, and promoting differential rights-

based claims."[56] Languages, then, are somehow perceived as fixed in time and fixed as

identity markers.

Stephen May takes on these ahistorical and narrowly interpreted political identity

weaknesses of LHR by suggesting a diachronic analysis to promote historically

contextualized frameworks within LHR scholarship. He further articulates the necessity

of LHR analyses to avoid the presumption of the hegemony of the dominant language as

uncontested and inevitable.[57] Furthermore, for him, the notion of dominant languages as

predominantly instrumental should not be considered as inevitable or unchanging,

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53 May, "Language rights."
54 Edwards, "Contextualizing Language Rights."
55 Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, *Linguistic Human Rights, 326.*
56 May, "Language rights," 320.
57 Ibid., 323-324.

particularly without sufficient context to understand their sociolinguistic and symbolic power dynamics.

The final critique of LHR's ability to address actual language mobility and use resonates the most for instances in the post-Soviet space where Russian language is often perceived as a social mobility tool. Some languages (usually majority languages) are more instrumental than others; and propagating the use of some languages (usually minority languages) may result in actual 'ghettoization' of their speakers.[58] It is in light of these prominent criticisms that policy analysts demand integration of their more 'downstream' approaches to identify results-based policy recommendations that have emerged as increasingly nuanced and critical when compared to dogmatic normative approaches like LHR.

1.1.2.3.3. Trends in Policy Analysis

The first place 'downstream' to look is where scholarship identifies practical applications of LHRs, including the policy makers and the discourse around them.[59] Grin's integration of normative and practical policy consideration contributes, with particular reference to sociolinguistics and cost-effectiveness,[60] toward the wider development of interdisciplinary approaches, like those to be utilized in this paper. However, it is not simple enough to merely consider legal, international, political, economic, demographic, historical, and cultural constraints on the conditions under

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58 May, "Language rights," 333.
59 Grin, *Language Policy Evaluation and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;* and Leontiev, "Linguistic Human Rights and Educational Policy in Russia."
60 Grin, *Language Policy Evaluation and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.*

which language policies are developed and implemented.[61] The cross-cutting, relational, and hidden aspects of the particular disciplinary approaches must be considered.

An important consideration that cross-cuts the above-mentioned constraints is the role of different stakeholders. For example, language policies are often masked in neutrality, of substance or stance, in order to generate popular support.[62] As important stakeholders, governing elite, opposition, bureaucrats, and prominent literary figures, were all under pressure to balance their nation-building goals with perceived policy neutrality during the years immediately following the post-Soviet transition. It is in these relational nuances that policy analysis can move away from a purely neo-classical approach to those influenced by critical theories, addressing the way in which "policies often create and sustain various forms of social inequality, and that policy makers usually promote the interests of dominant social groups."[63]

1.1.1.3.4. Critical Theories of Language Policy Analysis

Critical theories of language policy analysis tend to take on social change, historical-structural, or critical theory lenses. Social change scholars focus on bilingual education models and evidence as they influence society. Matthew Ciscel, for example, focuses his policy analysis on the realm of education using a conceptual dialectic between reform and relapse. The evolution of policy developments in a changing, transitioning society requires flexibility. Ciscel acknowledges that policy itself can

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61 Kymlicka and Grin, "Assessing the Politics of Diversity in Transition Countries," 19.
62 Wee, "Neutrality in Language Policy."
63 Tollefson, *Planning Language, Planning Inequality,* 42.

remain stagnant over time, while the application can be dynamic and vice versa.[64] In this

way, he is critical of looking at policy changes as inevitable social changes and

encourages further investigation into specificities of the environment and social reality

within which they are to be implemented.

The other way in which language policy relates directly to transition is how it is

both a product and a contributor to social change.[65] This conceptually mutual constitution

links language policy to the social stratification it both instigates and is instigated by.

Therefore, this research will elaborate arguments neither for nor against state

multilingualism, instead identify the way in which language policy and social

stratification are interdependent. Based on this interdependence, limits on social mobility

and change are derived.

In summary, this chapter outlined Kyrgyzstan's historical developments, under

Soviet communism, in the spheres of ideology, policy, and rights-based discourses. Then

theoretical tools were considered within this contextualization. Rights-based discourses

can be absolutely useful in advocacy campaigns, but suffer from several conceptual

shortcomings, including: their over-reliance on identity politics, neo-colonial imposition,

and omission of the multiple productive qualities of power. Critical policy analysis, on

the other hand, locates the interconnectivies and dissects the power dynamics behind

policy development and implementation that are more often over-looked by rights-based

discourses. Here, this analysis revealed that policies under the Soviet rule also showed

signs of dialectically reforming and relapsing, albeit influenced by a distinct Soviet

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64 Ciscel, "Reform and Relapse in Bilingual Policy in Moldova."
65 Cooper, *Language Planning and Social Change.*

ideology. We see distinct, yet similarly patterned, policies pointedly emerge in

Kyrgyzstan's transitional context, therefore, the next chapter also takes care to utilize a

postcolonial, critical policy analysis lens.

CHAPTER 2: Transitional Challenges

The challenges posed by Kyrgyzstan's post-Soviet transition, hinged on reformulations of nation-building among other components, are presented in this paper as the most contributing factors to exacerbated social stratification along linguistic, class and regional lines. In this chapter, the post-Soviet transition is first considered more broadly and then the Kyrgyzstani case is explicated where divergent from neighboring examples. Subsequently, educational transformation, and its associated social stratification, is pointed to as a key case of such an obstacle and a Bourdieuian theoretical framework is utilized to assess the interplay between language and education in social reproduction.

2.1. Language in Transition

Kyrgyzstan's transition from communism is a key site to identify the interdependence of language and social stratification, as "the establishment of educational and language policies which reflect a national identity in the midst of cultural and linguistic diversity has posed [a] myriad [of] political and social problems."[66] Independence in 1991 presented Kyrgyzstan with a challenge, faced by all of the former republics, of quadruple transitions. In contrast to other post-authoritarian transitions in other parts of the world, post-Soviet transitions, faced with short histories of a priori statehood and extensive cultural and linguistic pluralism, are theorized to have four primary components. Kuzio's 'quadruple transition' concept refers to 1) marketization, 2) democratization, and the distinct development of 3) nationhood and 4) stateness.[67]

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66 Luke, McHoul, and Mey, " On the limits of language planning," 26.
67 Kuzio, "Transition in Post-Communist States," 168-169.

The development of nationhood and stateness, in as much as they are interrelated, are particularly cogent in educational and linguistic institutionalization and planning. Although initially "education and language planners simply replaced Soviet ideology with a Kyrgyz ideology [while the] division into language tracks […] and the language teaching methodology remained unchanged."[68] Reform, and its accompanying rhetoric, still played a large role in Kyrgyzstan's post-Soviet transition.

Although, "one of the first legislative moves of each republic toward independence was the declaration of [...] the language bearing the same name as the republic as its official language,"[69] it is critical to problematize this nation-building element, as it assumes the direct alignment of nation and state. Educational and linguistic reforms during transition are better conceptualized using two parallel processes, de-Russification and Kyrgyzization. Then, the analysis can identify how and when these processes were competing or mutually constituative. During transition, rapid de-Russification was blamed for widening stratification and out-migration, the influence of which on discourse and policy formulations is explored below.

2.1.1. Out-migration

Predictions concerning the potential out-migration and repatriation of the USSR's 'stranded' ethnic Russians from the former Union republics were mostly exaggerated. Even those Slavic or German residents who did leave the republics in the early 1990s, approximately four out of twenty-five million, are now considered economically

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68 Korth, "Education and linguistic division in Kyrgyzstan," 103.
69 Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues,* 93.

motivated migrants and not categorized as repatriates.[70] Language legislation and the

exodus of Slavic Russian speakers from the new Central Asian states coincided, but

should not be putatively causally connected. There were many complex factors that

motivated out-migration and these had begun long before independence.[71]

Nonetheless, the rapid Russophone out-migration that did occur, as in the 590,000

people who departed Kyrgyzstan between 1989 and 1994,[72] was more than thirteen

percent of the country's population and spurred the fear that out-migration could continue

as drastically as some had expected. In response, Kyrgyzstan's moderate President Akaev

attempted from 1994 to 2000 to push through a constitutional amendment elevating the

Russian language to official status. The bill spent years bouncing from lower to upper

legislative houses and even spent time in the Constitutional Court to assess its

constitutionality, before finally passing in 2000.[73]

While this process was in limbo, official leaders, including Akaev, acted as if

Russian was already a second official language, while some prominent Kyrgyz scholars,

including Bubuina Oruzbaeva, Toktosun Akmatov, and Kachynba Artykbaev "argued that

until the law on the state language was fully implemented - according to the 1993 law all

official documents were to be written in Kyrgyz by the year 2000 - granting official

language status to Russian would further undermine the work to promote Kyrgyz."[74] Here

is where de-Russificiation and Kyrgyzization were viewed as competing processes. In

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70 Tishkov, Zayinchkovskaya, and Vitkovstkaya, "Migration in the countries of the former Soviet Union,"
      2, 12.
71 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 103.
72 Abazov, "Economic Migration in Post-Soviet Central Asia," 237.
73 Dave, "Shrinking Reach of the State?," 138-139.
74 Ibid.,140.

order to overcome the staunch intellectual and political competition over the country's linguistic situation, Akaev and his supporters cultivated a civic discourse for their nation-building project.

2.1.2. Mimicking of Civic Discourse

Dave, although in reference to neighboring Kazakhstan, identifies a pattern in elite post-Soviet nation-building that she terms the 'mimicking of civic discourse.' Here she refers to

> the emphasis on 'international', 'multi-ethnic' and 'civic' orientation of the new state, as well as the commitment to civic and democratic norms have remained declaratory and symbolic. [...] An informal, but de facto ethnic hierarchy, sustained by ethnic patronage and a neo-Soviet rhetoric of multi-ethnicity and internationalism, prevails in public and political spheres.[75]

The way in which these seemingly oppositional processes sustained each other illuminates the acute tension of language policies in the context of transition.

Critical to the understanding of this mimicking is to note that it was not utilized in a purely instrumental way. In fact, during transition, many government initiatives were overly optimistic about the country's future language policies and they operated under the actual misconception that "past tensions and suspicions [could] be overcome through integration, fostered through changes in the school curriculum and the emphasis on multiculturalism and multilingualism among the new 'Kyrgyzstani' generation."[76] In their optimism, it seems that language policy was taken for granted as a contributor to social

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75 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 136.
76 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 204-205.

change, without noting its dual role as a product of social change as well and without dedicated consideration of the mechanisms required for actually carrying out multilingual policies.

2.1.3. Key points of departure from neighboring states

Figure 1: Regional Map[77]

The Caucasus and Central Asia

All six post-Soviet, predominantly Muslim states proclaimed commitments to multiculturalism concurrently with their nationalizing language policies, to various degrees,[78] but the proclamation was explicitly pronounced under President Askar Akaev's Kyrgyzstan. Akaev used the message of 'Kyrgyzstan for All' to evoke the desired multiculturalism. Neighboring states of the former USSR coped with their linguistic

77 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Caucasus and Central Asia Political Map 1995."
78 Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language in the ex-Soviet Muslim States.*

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challenges as a component of nation-building based primarily on their variant population compositions, responses of state leadership, and their vast gap of resources.[79]

2.1.3.1. Population Compositions

Among the Central Asian republics, "Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were the two most Russified republics because of their large percentages of Slavic inhabitants and because of significant Russification of […] urban elites."[80] By Russification, much was linguistic, including the 65 percent of ethnic Kazakhs and 35 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz who claimed fluency in the Russian language in 1989, which far exceeds the percentages among non-Russian populations in other Central Asian republics.[81] This strong presence of the Russian language influenced the policy formulations as both countries eventually settled on multilingual compromises in stark contrast to neighboring Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan.

Nonetheless, there remains a common, critical component of language policy development in the post-Soviet space, in that they intended to promote the autonomy, power, and mobility of non-Russian "elites as a way to counteract the actual or perceived hold of Russians on the institutions of power."[82] Linguistic policies, especially those put forth initially upon independence, were conceptualized in this oppositional way.

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79 Dave, "The Shrinking Reach of the State?," 122.
80 Ibid., 121.
81 Ibid., 121.
82 Ibid., 126.

2.1.3.2. State Capacity

State capacity to enact language policies directed at the nation-building project refers to both legitimacy and resources. Legitimacy during transition can be best characterized by the consolidation of state power and the maintenance of stability. Initially, Kyrgyzstani elites were able to broker a uniquely consociational balance of clan factions, avoiding disastrous power struggles like that of the civil war in its southern neighbor Tajikistan.[83] However, the threat of instability was acute during the brief, yet violent, revolutions of 2005 and 2010. Because of this subdued, yet constant threat of upheaval, Kyrgyzstani elite arguably maintain less legitimacy than the elite of neighboring, autocratic Uzbekistan, for example.

In terms of the resources necessary to support language policies, Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in the post-Soviet space.[84] Inequalities of income and education were exacerbated by decentralization and diversification of financing for education. Regional and local budgets remain too low and are only able to cover a few select inputs, where the state is forced to cover the majority of educational costs.[85] Kazakhstan, on the other hand, opportunistically and justifiably developed oil and mineral resource excavation and exportation in order to reduce dependence on Russia and other sources of humanitarian aid.[86] This prosperity also somehow mitigates the internal demands on linguistic and education reform. Kyrgyzstan, in contrast, opened up quickly

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83 Collins, C*lan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia*, 125-131.
84 According to *World Bank* data on "Poverty and Equity": The post-Soviet state with the highest percentage of its population living below the poverty line (of $2 per day PPP) is Georgia, with 32.2 percent, while Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have slightly lower percentages of 27.7 and 21.7 respectively.
85 Mertaugh, "Education in Central Asia with Particular Reference to the Kyrgyz Republic," 158-159.
86 Dave, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, language and power,* 163.

to humanitarian aid from many influential world powers and many of these funds have been used for educational reform efforts.

On the broader, symbolic level, "Kyrgyzstan [...] does not consider the Russian language to be a threat to its national security or historical identity"[87] as is the case with several other post-Soviet states, with the Ukraine as a prime example. Though this is not to say that there is an actual threat or that this threat is heightened in the Ukraine. Still, Ukrainian elite have somehow more successfully discredited the Russian language and evoked a specific discourse targeting language purity towards furthering their ethnolinguistically-based upward mobility.[88]

The varied population compositions and state capacities are key points that influence the divergent linguistic policy formulations and outcomes among the former Soviet states. Although there remain numerous other specificities that play a role, including language attitudes and political configurations, those primary differences referred to here set Kyrgyzstan apart in its particular context of linguistic and educational transformation.

2.2. Educational Transformation

Undoubtedly, a central challenge of all post-Soviet transitions is the transformation of the education system. Both institutionally, the creation of a functioning Ministry of Education, and in content, the reorientation of training to meet both the specialization and generic needs of a transitioning market economy, characterize this

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87 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 202.
88 Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 32-33.

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fundamental challenge.[89] These specialized and generic needs are directly tied to language, in that the changing market economy both reacts to and places demands on Kyrgyzstan's linguistic relations. And these linguistic market relations have been defined by extensive bilingualism domestically and a reliance on Russian (and now trending towards English) internationally, which directly shape the implementation of higher education.

2.2.1. Institutionally

Educational institutions, as the sites of acculturation and indoctrination, were poised to play a key role in the nation-building process at transition. Somewhat paradoxically, the country's transition from nomadism to socialism "created a modern educational infrastructure and demand, even as it lessened local participation in educational policy and practice."[90] This section seeks to outline this tension between integration and withdrawal of state power in education reform.

2.2.1.1. Key Actors and Stakeholders

The key actors, wielding the aforementioned power, who are directly involved in education policy making, include the presidential administration, Ministry of Education, rectors of higher education institutions, and the Parliament's Committee on Education, are all to be considered in their relation to social stratification. All of these actors comprise a system notable in its centralization and politicization[91] with also further

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89 Mertaugh, " Education in Central Asia, with Particular Reference to the Kyrgyz Republic," 154-155.
90 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?*, 15.
91 Dukenbaev, "Politics and Public Policy in Post-Soviet Central Asia."

influence imposed by international actors.[92]

Administrators at the Ministry-level are politically appointed and generally have no experience in rural areas or with secondary schools. "And, since school leadership is rarely decentralized, decisions about the curriculum or administration in schools are often made by people who have never taught in or administered a public secondary school."[93] The Minister of Education and Sciences Kanat Sadykov fits this description, as a urbanite who worked in the capital for the Academy of Sciences before reaching his current position in 2010.[94] This Minister's recent decisions, to be explored later, reflect his detachment from on-the-ground realities of stratification.

The presidential administration now has a reduced role in formulations of policy regarding language and education since the inception of the new pseudo-parliamentary system determined by the 2010 Constitution. While the Parliament's Committee on Education remains a key decision-making body and has received increased foreign investment in training and processes since these governmental reforms of 2010.[95] Immediately after independence, international organizations and funding quickly stormed in to 'liberate' Kyrgyzstani social and educational institutions from the Soviet schooling ideology and methods.[96] These interventions continue and maintain strong biases towards their own explicit and implicit interests.

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92 Merrill, "Internationalization of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan."
93 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?,* 4.
94 The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, official website. http://www.gov.kg/?p=461#more-461
95 OSCE, "OSCE trains Kyrgyzstan's Parliament representatives on legislative process and parliamentary control."
96 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?*, 4.

2.2.1.2. Rural Challenges

Public discourse on language is represented by a strong regional divide, where regional elites from the South take the hardline for the strengthening of the Kyrgyz language, while northerners tend to be more supportive of the Russian language. This divide, however, is not exclusively regional, as we see "the exacerbation of the divide between urban or Russified Kyrgyz and rural or recent urban migrants has contributed to the sustained politicization of the language issue and the weakness of the state in formulating an effective policy or aiding its implementation."[97] Support for one or the other state language does not have to be mutually exclusive, but as language becomes more and more embedded in rural/urban cleavages, this exclusivity prevails.

Across national contexts, educational outcomes are impacted by rural/urban divisions. Fundamentally, "rural students are the least likely to go to college, even when they are otherwise comparable to students from urban areas" and this is never adequately addressed by policy in any country.[98] In Kyrgyzstan, state budget's fail to address even the basic infrastructure and livelihood needs of rural communities, let alone to address the gap in educational outcomes.

Furthermore, poverty concentrated in rural areas and psychological conceptions of stigma and prestige of particular languages remain challenges in the provision of multilingual education. Sixty-five percent of the population resides rurally, which complicates the delivery of education and substantially raises costs of reform and

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97 Dave, "Shrinking Reach of the State?," 136-137.
98 Adelman, "The Relationship Between Urbanicity and Educational Outcomes," 15.

sustainable implementation.[99]

This gap in educational implementation contributes to empirical gaps in performance. "New national higher education entrance testing mechanism in Kyrgyzstan also shows significant and superior test scores for urban as compared with rural test takers competing for university scholarships."[100] In neighboring Kazakhstan, preferential consideration for scholarships and grants are offered to several disadvantaged groups, including graduates of rural schools, who receive approximately thirty percent of the state's higher education funding.[101] The Kyrgyzstani Ministry of Education attempts to make similar provisions, but they fall short of addressing regional and linguistic inequities. In 2011, only the top ten percent of test takers in villages, high-mountain rural areas, and small towns were awarded state funding for their higher education, while fifteen percent of test takers in the capital Bishkek achieved eligibility for grants and scholarships.[102] The inclusion of new content and the language with which the tests are proctored further limit social mobility of rural students.

2.2.2. Content

Education, as a powerful tool of social mobility, does have its limits, but oddly these limits are manifested here in that quality varies so widely among Kyrgyzstan's exceptionally large amount of higher education institutions.[103] Because of this factors,

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99 Mertaugh, "Education in Central Asia, with Particular Reference to the Kyrgyz Republic," 161.
100 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?,* 5.
101 Weidman et al, "Access to Education in Five Newly Independent States of Central Asia and Mongolia," 190.
102 Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods, "Results of the Republican-wide Admissions Test," 27.
103 Mertaugh, "Education in Central Asia, with Particular Reference to the Kyrgyz Republic," 179.

educational content can be seen as thinly spread, in terms of discipline, methodology, and material resources. Educational materials and curricula are developed centrally, in the capital Bishkek, and do not take into account rural linguistic and teaching needs.[104]

"Kyrgyz[stani] pedagogy was mostly devised and created in Moscow [...] as part of the building of socialism and the creation of the "Soviet Man,"[105] which made reform, based on different goals, an essential aspect of nation-building. Thus, centralized decision-makers sought to include Kyrgyz national heroes and folklore directly into much of the educational curricula. Language teaching methodology itself contributes greatly, in its rote memorization of folklorist poems and songs for example, to the perception that Kyrgyz is not as useful of a language for academic or professional advancement.[106] The process and institution of education, in this context, are also tools in and of themselves.

2.2.3. Educational Reform Theoretical Tools

Here this paper is careful not to problematize the institution of education as such, rather I seek to describe how to conceptualize the institution as a tool, while remaining cognizant of the power behind the production of knowledge. To understand the crucial dynamics between language and education, some underlying aspects of education as a discourse need to be highlighted, citing prominent theories,

> Education may well be, as of right, an instrument whereby every individual […] can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we well know that in its distribution, in what it permits and what it prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle-lines of social conflict. Every education system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse with the knowledge and the powers it

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104 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian*, 132.
105 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?*, 3.
106 Korth, "Education and linguistic division in Kyrgyzstan," 106.

carries with it.[107]

Foucauldian analysis on education tend to illuminate that maintenance or modification which was masked by the ruse that is neutral educational reform.[108]

Neutrality cannot be found in educational institutions, so the primary task of the sociology of education is to address the inherent inequalities. McDonough and Fann discuss conceptualizing inequality in education, from individual-, organizational-, and field-level approaches. Because both organizational and individual contexts are integral in the formulation of empirical outcomes, they put forth field-level analysis as the method of integrating the two previous approaches. Most critically, field-level analysis is most useful in its ability to "account for reciprocal influence of students and institutions on each other."[109]

Particularly relevant to the discussion of higher education in its dialectical relationship with elite maintenance, field-level analysis allows for the discrete investigation of "the interconnectivity and interdependencies of inequalities."[110] McDonough and Fann refer to Boudieuian perspectives on educational structures in the relationships among culture, power, and stratification, while also identifying the "interplay between individual agency and organizational structures in shaping educational opportunity."[111]

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107 Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," 227.
108 Roth, "Of What Help Is He?," 694.
109 McDonough and Fann, "The Study of Inequality," 55-58.
110 Ibid., 82.
111 Ibid., 54.

2.2.3.1. Bourdieu's Social Reproduction

The primary theoretical tool of understanding educational reform in this paper will be Bourdieu's account of education not as a social mobility tool but as a tool of social reproduction.[112] The theorist of critical pedagogy, Henry Giroux, points to Bourdieu's unique contribution in that he tackles the oft overlooked notion of 'cultural capital,' "the socially determined tastes, certain kinds of prior knowledge, language forms, abilities, and modes of knowing that are unevenly distributed throughout history."[113] Particular to the nation-building context is the re-evaluation and, thus, redistribution, of cultural capital based on ideological shifts in the conception of the nation.

In total, Bourdieu identifies four types of capital, including the more obvious and prominent in discourse - financial capital - and additionally social, cultural, and symbolic capital.[114] All of these forms are convertible to one another and are posited, in that way, on somewhat equal footing. However, I will outline their relationships and dynamics that are particularly relevant for this analysis. Social capital, refers to "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition,"[115] which is exemplified in Kyrgyzstan's clan patronage patterns.[116] Within these networks of social capital, cultural capital can be utilized. Cultural capital has three potential forms: mind / body disposition, cultural objects / goods, or institutional, as in educational

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112 Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in education, society and culture*.
113 Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling,* 77.
114 Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," 14.
115 Bourdieu, "The forms of capital," 248.
116 Collins, C*lan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia.*

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qualifications.[117] In the way that they are convertible, all of his capitals are directly related to educational reform and elite reproduction.

The reproduction of capital and power is where education figures in as most prominent. In fact,

> every institutionalized educational system owes the specific characteristics of its structure and functioning to the fact that […] it has to produce and reproduce the institutional conditions whose existence and persistence […] are necessary both to the exercise of its essential function of inculation and to the fulfillment of its function of reproducing a cultural arbitrary which it does not produce (cultural reproduction), the reproduction of which contributes to the reproduction of the relations between the groups or classes (social reproduction).[118]

The reproductions are utilized as such, but also carry great symbolic power. Symbolic capital relates more to the invisible conversion of capital to power, in that, "objective power relations tend to reproduce themselves in symbolic power relations."[119]

"Bourdieu […] situations the school as the central generative site of the distinct habitus of the culture."[120] Therefore, this analysis will take into account this education site of elite reproduction, including culture and language, and take a critical stance on all policies devised to maintain or reform its structure. Giroux advocates for analyzing the entirety of education processes, including "curriculum, teaching methods, forms of evaluation, textbooks, school organization, and the organization of teachers."[121] While such a comprehensive analysis remains desirable, this paper focuses primarily on the linguistic divisions reinforced and produced by the education system in Kyrgyzstan.

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117 Nash, "Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction," 432.
118 Bourdieu, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture,* 54.
119 Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," 21.
120 Nash, "Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction," 435.
121 Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling,*79.

Kyrgyzstan's transitional trajectory is best understood using the conceptual framework of social reproduction, where the meaning and values that set the stage for intergroup relations were functionally reformed and relapsed. More specifically, definitions of social and cultural capital changed along with the nation-building context, instigating tensions between the transitional processes of de-Russification and Kyrgyzization. This dynamic interplay stands as a formidable obstacle to reducing stratification and out-migration as well as toward the achievement of other nation-building aims.

CHAPTER 3: Linguistic Capital in Education

This chapter focuses on the interrelated empirical fields, from terminology to assessment, and levels, from primary to higher education, through the lens of linguistic capital. Through this lens, linguistic divisions are reified and the maintenance of elite dominance is compounded through educational access.

As an officially, yet contested, bilingual country, the language of education in Kyrgyzstan is highly politicized. The intersection of language and education forms the politicized and divisive space claimed by linguistic capital. Linguistic capital is tied to a given social origin, manifested in both domestic and educational points of access to language learning.[122] Although language learning initially and concomitantly occurs in the home, emphasis here will be placed on schooling. However, and as Bourdieu argues, the linguistic skills developed at home are valued differently by the education system,

> particularly manifest in the first years of schooling when the understanding and use of language are the major points of leverage for teachers' assessments, never ceases to be felt: style is always taken into account, implicitly or explicitly, at every level of the educational system and, to a varying extent, in all university careers, even scientific ones.[123]

In this way we can conceptualize linguistic capital as a subset or intersection of both cultural and symbolic capital. Societal divisions, along class or ethnicity or otherwise, interplay with language divisions in a dialectical manner reflecting the universal convertability of the forms of capital.

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122 Bourdieu, *Reproduction in Education*, 80.
123 Ibid.*,* 73.

3.1. Linguistic Divisions

The linguistic divisions in post-Soviet states like Kyrgyzstan can be compared to other postcolonial linguistic environments in certain aspects; particularly, in the discrepancy between the ease with which legislation demoting colonial languages is passed and the difficulty seen in impacting actual language practices. The latter requires "enormous state capacity, planning, sustained investment, and most important, a commitment on the part of the bureaucracy and other professional strata educated in the language of the former colonial power. "[124] In this decisive aspect, Kyrgyzstan's bureaucracy and elite have shown an erratic commitment to educational reform, especially in relation to language.

In the Soviet education system, few Kyrgyzstani citizens attended higher education institutions – less than 15 percent.[125] Educated exclusively in the Russian language before 1991, this elite strata continues to holds the majority of bureaucratic positions, the upheavals of two revolutions notwithstanding. These linguistic divisions, now in a post-independence context, begin long before university education.

3.1.1. Primary and Secondary Schools

Britta Korth argues that linguistic divisions at the primary and secondary school level in Kyrgyzstan instigate psychological barriers between speakers while contributing to and reflecting a societal division based on language. Moreover, this manifestation in the public education system, she argues, contributes to a common perception of Kyrgyz

124 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 106.
125 DeYoung, "Conceptualizing paradoxes of post-Socialist education in Kyrgyzstan," 641.

language as the less useful and less formal language in Kyrgyzstani society, when compared to Russian language.[126]

Those socialized in Russian have access to more education, information, and job opportunities[127] and this socialization becomes a matter of public concern first at the preschool level. Data from 2005-2006 shows 448 preschools in operation throughout the country, serving 50,365 children. Of these preschools, 120 use exclusively the Kyrgyz language, 235 use Russian exclusively and 17 are run by international organizations in operation multilingualy.[128] This ratio of almost 2:1 Russian-language predominance at this incipient stage of the education system seems counter-intuitive. However, many preschools are privately owned and operated, which means that they cater more exclusively to elite and urban residents and are not directly subject to state intervention.

At the secondary school level, the ratio is skewed toward more Kyrgyz-language institutions. The shift imposed by language policies at transition was conducted from above and in many locations it was noted that "the government turned Russian schools into Kyrgyz schools merely by decree, without ensuring the supply of qualified human resources and textbooks.[129] In 2005-2006, of the total 2,091 secondary schools in the country, only 148 continued to operate exclusively in Russian, while 361 integrated the use of Russian along with Kyrgyz and other minority languages.[130] This small number of Russian-language schools "are highly prestigious and in high demand by Russian parents

126 Korth, " Education and linguistic division in Kyrgyzstan."
127 Ibid., 98.
128 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 214.
129 Korth, "Education and linguistic division in Kyrgyzstan," 104.
130 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 215.

and by those from other ethnic groups."[131] Thus, focusing solely on counting institutions fails to capture the social, cultural, or linguistic capital reproduced in Russian-language schools.

Parents strive to give their children the best opportunity to succeed in higher education, while identifying Russian-language education as a key component of that aim. As commented by a current university student in the capital city, "because I did not finish school here [Bishkek], but in a village, I even have problems with the Russian language."[132] The student's acknowledgment of this linguistic barrier is both a reflection of her personal experience and reflection of the discourse supported by her parents and community. This discourse, then, reproduces the linguistic and cultural capital of Russian-language schooling.

But in reference to practice, "the choice of language for teaching is often situation-oriented and depends on the mother tongue of the teacher and students."[133] Students and institutions do reciprocally influence one another and their dynamics show how variable linguistic capital among teachers can exacerbate social stratification even at the secondary school level.

3.1.2. Higher Education Institutions

But even more than prestige, there remain cogent and practical motivating factors for the continued use of Russian-language education among elites. Due to the lack of

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131 Pavlenko, "Russian in post-Soviet countries," 72.
132 DeYoung, "Conceptualizing paradoxes of post-Socialist education in Kyrgyzstan," 651.
133 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 215.

higher education institutions and programs operating in the Kyrgyz language, many parents transferred their children back to Russian schools after a brief experiment with Kyrgyz schools in the early-1990s following independence from the Soviet Union.[134] This shift reduced the demand for improved curriculum and text book development in Kyrgyz-language higher education and reinforced the gap between those who graduate from Kyrgyz- and Russian-language secondary schools. This shift demonstrates the way higher education institutions can and do set the linguistic agenda, while compounding their role as instruments of social reproduction.

The stratification that fortifies and is fortified by the multilingual policy in higher education affects different stakeholders in distinct ways.[135] Parents are granted the right to choose the language of their children's primary education – between Kyrgyz and Russian schools.[136] This choice bestows at least some citizens with their agency and at least some institutional recognition of linguistic diversity, which is often heralded by multiculturalism scholars. But Kyrgyz-language schools suffer from a lack of textbooks, challenging their effectiveness, and do not prepare students for higher education linguistically, as the majority of programs and reputable faculties at state and private universities utilize learning materials in the Russian language.

Russian schools, however, are not attended by only ethnically identified Russians; nor should they be conceptualized as such, unless we putatively assume a direct link between language and ethnicity. In fact, Russian language schools maintain elite community status across ethnicity discourse and enable ethnic Kyrgyz parents, who send

134 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian* , 132.
135 Wee, "Neutrality in Language Policy."
136 Also, Uzbek- and Tajik-language schools are offered in select regions of southern Kyrgyzstan.

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their children to Russian schools, to provide their children with increased social capital.

3.1.2.1. Specialized Terminology

During the Soviet institutionalization of Kyrgyz-language script, much of the technical vocabulary was borrowed from Russian out of expedience, yet this terminology fortifies the Russian language with extensive symbolic capital and maintains the particular type of diglossia present in the country. In total, seventy to eighty percent of scientific terminology in Kyrgyz is borrowed from the Russian language.[137] However, these words are not often utilized, as "local scientific [...] work is mostly produced in Russian, a situation that is distinct from current linguistic research traditions in Ukraine and in the Baltic countries where work on national languages is published in these languages."[138] State commitments and resources in these other examples were dedicated more deliberately to the task of inventing and naturalizing technical vocabularies in local languages.

Significantly, "even specialists in Turkic philology prefer to write in Russian or in English, in order to communicate with colleagues worldwide."[139] The Kyrgyz language does not contribute substantially to linguistic capital within Kyrgyzstan, let alone in the global academic arena. Humanities studies are offered in Kyrgyz and Russian, but more technical subjects like socioeconomics, natural sciences, and technology are dominated by the Russian language.[140] This bias can be seen as reifying "the unequivocal linkage of

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137 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian,* 83.
138 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 214.
139 Ibid., 214.
140 Ibid., 217.

Russian with modernity and mobility, [with] its diffusion to all echelons of the society and its role in promoting egalitarianism [that paradoxically] enabled it to attain hegemony."[141]

At the higher education level, many decisions regarding language of instruction are constrained by the linguistic capacities of the instructors, as was previously mentioned in reference to the primary and secondary school-levels. Furthermore, in deciding the language of instruction in educational institutions, decision makers are often constrained by political, elite-driven, aims that contradict pedagogical reasoning.[142]

3.2. Maintenance of Elite Dominance

Language policy and education both are, in effect, social engineering embedded in larger discourse.[143] The limited agency of elites in this engineering is captured in Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital. Nonetheless, key points of access to higher education are articulated by state actors and enacted by educational institutions, through their funding, corruption, and testing. These instruments serve as tools for the maintenance of elite dominance via the axis of linguistic divisions.

3.2.1. Funding

State bodies, like the Ministry of Education, lacked sufficient resources to maintain the existing educational infrastructure, staffing, and curriculum, let alone

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141 Dave, *Kazakhstan,* 68.
142 Korth, "Education and linguistic division in Kyrgyzstan," 98.
143 Luke, McHoul, and Mey, "On the limits of language planning."

implement reforms on it.[144] For this reason, many universities are funded by foreign

bodies, including some of the most prestigious, American University of Central Asia,

Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University, and Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, and do not

provide instruction primarily in the Kyrgyz language.[145] It is clear that these universities

in Kyrgyzstan "represent different forces fighting for influence in the republic."[146] These

influences range from the geopolitical to the personal, but are generally predicated on the

neo-colonial legacy of treating the region like a 'great game.'[147] While it has already been

mentioned that neutrality in educational reform is, at best, a pretense, this extends to

international funding from donors as well. "Most of the loans and grants for educational

improvement projects in Kyrgyzstan from international donors are far more political and

cultural than they are strictly 'educational.'"[148]

     Since independence, the burden of higher education tuition has shifted almost

entirely to the parents and students, away from the national government.[149] The theory

behind Marxist-Leninist education should be considered here because it established the

precedent of education for all. "Since socialism promised approximately equal salaries

for those who went to college as it did for those who chose to go into agriculture or

industry, demand for university training would be more natural under socialism, and only

those truly interested in higher learning would want to attend."[150] But presently, parents

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144 Mertaugh, "Education in Central Asia, with Particular Reference to the Kyrgyz Republic," 4.
145 DeYoung, "Conceptualizing paradoxes of post-Socialist education in Kyrgyzstan," 648.
146 Orusbaev, Mustajoki, and Protassova, Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan," 217.
147 The most popular historical narrative of this colonial rivalry can be found in: Hopkirk, *The Great Game*.
148 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?*, 23-24.
149 DeYoung,"Conceptualizing paradoxes of post-Socialist education in Kyrgyzstan," 641.
150 DeYoung, Reeves, and Valyayeva, *Surviving the Transition?*, 16.

and family members sacrifice large percentages of their small incomes to support students' tuition and associated costs, as the transition to the market economy reevaluates and commodifies higher education, while the lingering socialist educational ideology maintains a subdued role.

3.2.1.1. Corruption

The diversification of funding sources, as discussed above, has additional negative implications in that "the practice of private contributions to schools has been subverted from its original purpose of augmenting educational resources [...] to corrupt practices such as 'selling' examination grades and places to the most coveted schools and programs, and has eroded the credibility of diplomas and degrees to employers and the public."[151] More than credibility is lost, underemployment of recent university graduates is pervasive (cited somewhere between 53 and 80 percent).[152] Although most students, parents, and employers express distaste with corruption in higher education, there are very few actual initiatives enacted to address it or to link it to other educational reform issues.[153]

3.2.2. Testing as an Access Point

Of the state's three functions in language policy: executive, regulative, and stimulatory, the second dominates discourse and attention (eg. declaring official state language).[154] In terms of the state's regulative role, there are two key points where the state intervenes to administer exams in the education system.

151 Mertaugh, "Education in Central Asia, with Particular Reference to the Kyrgyz Republic," 7.
152 DeYoung, "Conceptualizing paradoxes of post-Socialist education in Kyrgyzstan," 642.
153 Ibid., 645.
154 Leontiev, "Linguistic Human Rights and Educational Policy in Russia," 66.

Firstly, the state requires all graduating school pupils to pass an exam at the end of their final academic year. The Minister of Education, Kanat Sadykov, announced in April 2012 upcoming changes in the nation-wide exam administered to all out-going school pupils. The updated State Exam (*Goseksam*), asserts the Minister, will require all students to take a Kyrgyz language portion beginning next year, 2013.[155] Prior to this declaration, the exam was administered in the primary language of instruction of the the school, Russian, Kyrgyz, or Uzbek. The ramifications of this reform, particular speculation on the capacity of the system to prepare students for such an exam, will be considered in the following section.

Secondly, admission to higher education, and the contingent funding and scholarships, is determined by Kyrgyzstan's National Test (*Obscherespublikanskoe Testirovanie* or *ORT*). This exam is also administered in Kyrgyz-, Russian-, or Uzbek-languages depending on the students' preferences. While only one thousand (out of forty thousand total) took the exam in Uzbek,[156] protests are often held in front of administrative buildings in both the state and regional capitals to push for the abolition of this Uzbek-language exam. Strangely, the mobilization focuses pressure on the test's content, a key point of access, and not on closing down the country's 91 Uzbek-language secondary schools.[157] Students who took the exam in the Russian-language in 2011 scored an average of almost 30 points (where the maximum score is 200) better than those who

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155 24.kg News Agency, "Kanat Sadykov."
156 Shoshina, "Row Over Uzbek Language in Kyrgyzstan."
157 I cannot adequately explain why such protests would be directed towards the Uzbek-language within the scope of this paper, as ethnically framed tensions between Southern Kyrgyz and Uzbeks is an increasingly complex issue in contemporary Kyrgyzstani ethnopolitical discourse.

took the exam in Kyrgyz or Uzbek.[158] This discrepancy in the provision of quality

education, or at least qualified test preparation, does not, however, inspire similar

political mobilization.

Utilizing reports from the Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching, who

are responsible for implementing the ORT, the universities who accept students with the

highest average score are listed in the following table.[159] Noticeably absent is the

American University of Central Asia, which is commonly viewed as quite prestigious, but

does not adhere to standard admission or scholarship award procedures. With that

exception, the following list includes the most prestigious universities in Kyrgyzstan.

Figure 2: Universities with High-Achieving Incoming Students, Kyrgyzstan (2011)[160]

Language of Instruction	Higher Education Institution	Average ORT score of admitted 1st year students (2011)
Russian Kyrgyz English (foreign students)	Kyrgyz State Medical Academy	181.9
Russian	Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University	180.5
Turkish Kyrgyz	Kyrgyz-Turkish University Manas	172.6
Russian	International University of Kyrgyzstan	168.3
Russian English	Kyrgyz Economic University	151
Russian Kyrgyz	Kyrgyz National University	146.7
Russian	Bishkek Humanities University	144.4

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158 Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods, "Results of the Republican-wide
    Admissions Test," 34
159 Ibid., 78.
160 Ibid., 34.

Russian Kyrgyz	Academy of Management under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic	140.1
English Turkish (1st year students)	International University of Ata-Turk Alatoo	139.7
English	University of Management and Design	139.6
Russian Kyrgyz English (foreign students)	Osh State University	138.9

In June of 2002, thousands of Kyrgyzstan's recent secondary school graduates participated in the ORT for the first time. At its inception, the exam, funded primarily by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and striving to improve accountability and monitoring of educational performance, consisted of three parts: mathematics, reading comprehension, and practical grammar in the mother-tongue. Additional sections, including optional sections on chemistry, biology, English, German, history, and physics, have been added over the years to increase the relevance or functionality of the exam. All of the required and optional sections are proctored in three languages, Kyrgyz, Russian, or Uzbek, depending on the students' preferences.[161]

Linguistic diversity among the universities listed is evident, yet perhaps misleading. Only one of the listed universities is located outside of the capital city Bishkek, Osh State University, which is located in the South and is the second largest urban center. The language of instruction, as several are often listed, varies by department unless otherwise noted.

Despite the wide linguistic accommodation offered by the ORT, succeeding at the

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161 Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods, "Results of the Republican-wide Admissions Test," 5-6.

university can be profoundly difficult without Russian-language skills. If a student receives a high ORT score in Kyrgyz or Uzbek, thus qualifying for admittance and subsidized funding, he or she will still have to develop sufficient Russian-language skills in order to attend. There are many multilingual university options, but limited departments within which students can thrive without this linguistic capital.

CONCLUSION

Educational reforms in Kyrgyzstan are, as expected, directed at nation-building, but the question remains as to what kind of nation is envisioned by the stakeholders undertaking the building. Furthermore, the formidable gap between envisioned policy outcomes and lived experiences is exceptionally unpredictable in the transitional context. Nation-building potentially undermines existing notions of social, cultural, and linguistic capital in its institutionalization of diverse nationalizing values.

First of all, the institutionalization of these values is influenced by the lingering ideology and terminology of Soviet rule. Primarily, the firm stance on ascriptive ethnic identity as an articulated domain of the state combined with the very notion of a 'titular' nation are problematic. These hard-line assumptions of congruence, between state and ethnicity, ethnicity and language, and self-identification and ascriptive categories, all contribute to conceptual confusion among policy makers and implementing bodies.

Most influential in this puzzle remains the challenges of the transition away from the Soviet model of nationhood. At this axis of political, cultural, financial, institutional, and linguistic upheaval, the meanings and values that sustained previous mechanisms of social reproduction were undermined. Often, policy formulations were developed in response to current events, rapid out-migration for example, without the capacity to foresee the ways in which the reaction both altered and was altered by the production of symbolic capital.

As these capitals shifted, key transformations can be noted, including the

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exacerbation of the urban/rural divide in educational access, politically isolated administrators of educational institutions taking more centralized roles in curriculum development, and multi-directional shifts in language attitudes. Rural areas of Kyrgyzstan are intersectionally disadvantaged in their poverty, isolation, and linguistic stigma. Although, both Kyrgyz- and Russian-language use marks a level of prestige or stigma depending on the social context,[162] rural speech patterns are systematically undervalued and attributed less cultural or linguistic capital.

Within the context of this educational transformation, this essay has explored the interconnectedness of secondary and higher education. The disconnect between the two linguistic settings sets the stage for increased social stratification and a paradoxical devaluation of each of the state languages in different contexts. A lack of capacity is primarily to blame for much of this disconnect, but the implementation of nation-wide examinations demonstrate a commitment to accountability and performance. Despite such commitments to reform, mutilingual educational policies in Kyrgyzstan continue to contribute to social stratification because of the particular conditions present here.

For the remainder of this analysis, it would be valuable to speculate on the potential ramifications of reforms to require Kyrgyz-language testing at all schools. In the context of such isolated reforms, that is without investing in the development of Kyrgyz-language materials for higher education, such actions have the potential to further contribute to disconnect between secondary and higher education. There are already substantially more Kyrgyz-language secondary schools throughout the country, for which

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162 Korth, *Language Attitudes towards Kyrgyz and Russian*.

the proposed testing reform would have a minimal impact. For the students of Russian or Uzbek schools, the proposed reform could add pressure to their existing linguistic context where the Kyrgyz language is attributed little value. In this context where de-Russification is so often played off of Kyrgyzization, this speculative example illuminates the ineffectual way in which they are jointly deployed.

However, as previously articulated, the waves of policy reforms in Kyrgyzstan are so often accompanied by relapses and this current event should not prove to be an exception. The fluctuations of language policies since independence have contributed to increased elite dominance, often times, as a function of their very flexibility. Where multilingual frameworks are potentially suitable bases for educational policies, this analysis has shown how the Kyrgyzstani transitional mechanisms fail to respond adequately to the variety of challenges faced. After continued reflection on this educational linguistic aspect of post-Soviet transitions, there still remains much to be understood about the fates of both languages and nations.

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