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IQTISODIY, IJTIMOIY VA MADANIY HUQUQLARNI TA’MINLASH: GLOBAL CHAQIRIQLAR VA MILLIY YECHIMLAR

OFFICIAL LABEL, ACTUAL PRACTICE: ALIGNING THE DECLARED AND ACTUAL LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION IN UZBEKISTAN’S RUSSIAN-MEDIUM CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between the officially declared language of instruction and actual language practices in Russian-medium classes in Uzbekistan. It focuses on the use of Russian and Uzbek during subject teaching, classroom interaction, explanation of terminology, and communication between teachers and students. The study aims to identify potential differences between institutional language designations and everyday classroom practices and to explore the pedagogical, linguistic, and institutional factors that may influence teachers’ language choices. The research framework combines document analysis, classroom observation, teacher interviews, and student questionnaires to provide a comprehensive understanding of multilingual classroom communication. Particular attention is given to the distinction between the officially designated language of instruction and the use of additional languages to support students’ comprehension and participation. The study may contribute to the development of context-sensitive approaches to language policy implementation, teacher professional development, and educational monitoring in Uzbekistan.

Keywords

language of instruction, Russian-medium education, multilingualism, classroom interaction, language policy, Uzbekistan, translanguaging.

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Introduction

Language of instruction plays a central role in educational policy and classroom communication. It influences how teachers explain subject content, how students participate in lessons, and how educational institutions implement language-related requirements. In multilingual societies, however, the language officially assigned to a class may not always correspond to the full range of languages used in everyday teaching and learning.

Uzbekistan represents a relevant context for examining this relationship because Uzbek and Russian are used in different educational and social settings. Russian-medium classes provide an opportunity to investigate how institutional language designations interact with teachers’ pedagogical choices and students’ multilingual resources.

The distinction between an official instructional language and actual classroom language practices is particularly important in situations where teachers and students use more than one language to clarify concepts, explain unfamiliar terminology, manage classroom activities, or facilitate peer communication. Such practices may support comprehension, although their frequency, functions, and educational consequences cannot be assumed without systematic investigation.

Existing scholarship on multilingual education emphasizes that language use in classrooms should be examined not only through formal policy documents but also through interactions between teachers and learners. García and Wei (2014), for example, discuss translanguaging as an approach to understanding how multilingual speakers draw on their linguistic resources. Similarly, Spolsky (2004) conceptualizes language policy through the interaction of language practices, beliefs, and management.

Despite these theoretical contributions, the relationship between officially declared and actually used instructional languages requires context-specific examination. In particular, empirical evidence is needed to establish whether Russian-medium classes in Uzbekistan operate predominantly in Russian or involve systematic use of Uzbek and other languages in particular instructional situations.

The purpose of this study is therefore to examine the alignment between the declared language of instruction and actual language practices in Russian-medium classes in Uzbekistan.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the language officially designated for instruction correspond to the language used during classroom teaching?
2. In which classroom activities, if any, do teachers and students use languages other than the officially designated instructional language?
3. What pedagogical, institutional, and linguistic factors may explain differences between official designation and actual practice?
4. How can educational institutions evaluate classroom language practices without overlooking the multilingual needs of teachers and students?

The study is guided by the proposition that official language designation and actual classroom language use are related but analytically distinct dimensions of educational practice.

Methods

The study proposes a mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative and qualitative evidence. This approach is appropriate because the relationship between official language designation and classroom language use involves both measurable patterns and contextual explanations.

The quantitative component would identify the frequency and distribution of language use across classroom activities. The qualitative component would examine why teachers and students select particular languages in specific educational situations.

The research setting comprises Russian-medium classes in educational institutions in Uzbekistan. The final sample should include institutions with different student populations, geographical locations, and educational profiles where feasible.

Participants may include teachers responsible for delivering subject content, students enrolled in Russian-medium classes, and school administrators involved in educational monitoring.

The final article should specify the number of participating institutions, teachers, and students; the sampling procedure; the data collection period; and the inclusion criteria. These details must reflect the actual research conducted.

Four complementary methods are proposed.

Analysis. Relevant institutional records and applicable education regulations would be examined to identify the officially designated language of instruction. The analysis should distinguish national legislation, institutional documentation, and classroom-level records.

Observations would record the languages used during teacher explanations, instructions, assessment, classroom management, and student interaction. A structured observation sheet could document the instructional activity, language used, communicative purpose, and approximate duration.

Teacher interviews would explore language choices, students’ comprehension, subject-specific terminology, institutional expectations, and perceived challenges associated with multilingual classroom communication.

Questionnaires would investigate students’ perceptions of the languages used in lessons, their understanding of subject content, and the situations in which they find additional linguistic explanations helpful.

Analytical framework

The study distinguishes three analytical dimensions:

1. **Declared instructional language:** the language formally specified in relevant educational or institutional documents.
2. **Primary language of instruction:** the language predominantly used to explain subject content and deliver the lesson.
3. **Supplementary classroom languages:** additional languages used for clarification, translation, classroom management, or student interaction.

For quantitative analysis, the proportion of observed instructional time devoted to each language may be calculated as follows:

[P_l=\frac{T_l}{T_{\mathrm{total}}}\times100]

where (P_l) represents the percentage of observed instructional time devoted to language (l), (T_l) is the time recorded for that language, and (T_{\mathrm{total}}) is the total observed instructional time.

Language use should be coded according to clearly defined rules. Where teachers switch languages within a single explanation, the observation protocol should specify whether coding is based on utterances, instructional episodes, or time intervals.

Qualitative interview and observation data would be analyzed thematically. Initial categories could include comprehension support, terminology explanation, institutional expectations, student participation, and teacher language preferences.

Participation should be voluntary and based on informed consent. Where students are minors, the relevant parental or guardian consent and student assent procedures should be followed. Institutional permission, confidentiality, secure data handling, and anonymization should be ensured.

The study should not treat the use of additional languages as evidence of non-compliance automatically. Any assessment of compliance must be based on applicable regulations and the actual institutional context.

Results

As this manuscript is a research framework rather than a report of completed fieldwork, the results section identifies the principal empirical outputs required to answer the research questions. Numerical findings must be added after data collection and analysis.

The first analytical task is to compare the language recorded in institutional documents with the language observed during teaching.

Table 1.

Framework for assessing the alignment of instructional languages

Analytical dimension	Evidence required	Indicator
Official designation	Institutional records and applicable regulations	Formally declared language
Teacher explanation	Classroom observations	Share of instructional time by language
Classroom instructions	Observation records	Language used for instructions
Subject terminology	Lesson recordings or observation notes	Language used to explain key concepts
Student interaction	Observation and questionnaire data	Languages used in peer communication
Teacher perspectives	Semi-structured interviews	Reported reasons for language choices

The completed analysis should identify whether the officially declared language is also the predominant language of instruction and whether additional languages are used for specific pedagogical purposes.

The second analytical task is to establish the distribution of language use across different classroom activities. The results should distinguish between subject-content delivery, brief translation, extended explanation, classroom management, and informal student interaction.

For example, a teacher may deliver most of a lesson in Russian while using Uzbek briefly to clarify a complex concept. Such a pattern differs from a lesson in which both languages are used extensively for subject-content delivery.

Table 2.

Proposed structure for reporting classroom observations

Classroom activity	Russian (%)	Uzbek (%)	Other languages (%)
Explanation of subject content	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated
Classroom instructions	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated
Explanation of terminology	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated
Assessment and feedback	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated
Student interaction	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated

Note: The table is a reporting template. Values must be calculated from actual observations, and categories should be adapted to the languages and practices documented in the sample.

The interview analysis should investigate the reasons teachers give for selecting particular languages. Potential analytical categories include students’ comprehension, the complexity of subject matter, the availability of terminology, teachers’ linguistic repertoires, and institutional expectations.

These categories represent hypotheses for analysis rather than established findings. Their importance should be determined through systematic coding and comparison of interview responses.

Questionnaire results should indicate how students perceive the relationship between the declared instructional language and classroom practice. Relevant variables may include perceived clarity of explanations, opportunities to participate, understanding of subject-specific terminology, and preferences regarding supplementary language use.

Where possible, student perceptions should be compared with observation data. This would help distinguish between reported language practices and directly documented classroom behavior.

Discussion

The proposed framework highlights the importance of distinguishing formal language designation from the linguistic practices through which teaching and learning occur. An institutional record identifies the declared language of instruction, but it does not independently establish which languages are used in every classroom activity.

This distinction is consistent with broader research on language policy. Spolsky (2004) argues that language policy encompasses not only explicit management but also language practices and beliefs. Consequently, an analysis limited to institutional documentation may overlook the informal and pedagogical dimensions of classroom communication.

The framework also draws on research into multilingual language practices. García and Wei (2014) explain how multilingual speakers can mobilize their linguistic resources to construct meaning. In Russian-medium classrooms, the use of Uzbek or another shared language may therefore serve different purposes, including clarifying unfamiliar concepts, supporting participation, and explaining specialized terminology. Whether these practices improve learning outcomes, however, requires evidence rather than assumption.

A further consideration concerns the distinction between occasional supplementary language use and a broader pattern of bilingual instruction. A short translation or clarification does not necessarily mean that the declared instructional language has been displaced. Conversely, regular use of another language for substantial portions of subject-content delivery may indicate a more complex relationship between formal designation and actual practice.

These differences suggest that educational monitoring should document the functions, frequency, and context of language use rather than relying solely on the presence or absence of additional languages. Such an approach could provide teachers and administrators with a more precise basis for professional development and classroom support.

The practical implications of the study depend on the empirical findings. If observations reveal substantial differences between declared and actual practices, institutions could review language-related guidance, improve subject-specific terminology resources, and provide professional development in multilingual pedagogy. If the differences are limited to brief explanatory episodes, recommendations may instead focus on documenting effective teaching strategies and supporting student comprehension.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, classroom observations may influence teachers’ behavior. Second, findings from a limited number of institutions may not represent all Russian-medium classes in Uzbekistan. Third, self-reported practices and perceptions may differ from observed behavior. Finally, the relationship between language choice and educational outcomes cannot be established without appropriate learning measures and a suitable research design.

Future research could extend the analysis across regions, subjects, and school types and investigate whether particular classroom language practices are associated with students’ comprehension, participation, and academic performance.

Conclusion

This study proposes an empirical framework for examining the relationship between the officially declared language of instruction and actual classroom language practices in Russian-medium classes in Uzbekistan. It emphasizes the need to distinguish formal designation, the predominant language used for teaching, and supplementary languages employed for specific communicative and pedagogical purposes.

The proposed combination of document analysis, classroom observation, interviews, and student questionnaires would make it possible to investigate both the extent of alignment and the factors associated with language choice.

The central implication is methodological: an accurate assessment of instructional-language practices requires evidence from both institutional documents and classroom interaction. The framework may contribute to more transparent educational monitoring, context-sensitive teacher development, and a better understanding of multilingual classroom communication.

The final conclusions concerning the extent of alignment and its educational implications should be formulated only after the empirical data have been collected and analyzed.

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