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Research Article

LINGUISTIC SOCIALIZATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CIVIC
IDENTITY IN POST-REFORM KAZAKHSTAN: A SOCIOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE ON THE “ADALAZAMAT” CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

State-orchestrated language reform and civic identity formation converge in ways that remain underexplored in post-Soviet contexts of deliberate national consolidation. This study examines how linguistic resocialization relates to civic norm internalization within Kazakhstan’s “Adal Azamat” (Responsible Citizen) framework. Concurrent mixed-methods design combined a stratified five-site survey ($n = 780$) with semi-structured interviews ($n = 42$) conducted September 2023–February 2024. Cluster analysis yielded three distinct profiles, interpreted as stages of linguistic socialization (nominative acquisition, pragmatic appropriation, axiological internalization); this theoretically motivated sequence cannot be tested cross-sectionally. Hierarchical regression identified linguistic practice as the strongest normative-internalization predictor ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$), weaker among rural respondents (interaction $\beta = -0.14$, $p = .003$). A bootstrapped mediation model was consistent with an indirect pathway through axiological internalization, though cross-sectional data preclude causal conclusions. Language practice and civic norm internalization are closely linked, making value-laden practice a promising language-policy and civic-education target.

Keywords: Linguistic socialization, Civic identity, Adal Azamat, Language reform, Kazakhstan.

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary global practice, the reciprocal relationship between state-sponsored language reform and civic identity formation programs has emerged as one of the most pressing domains within political sociology and societal research (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Heller, 2007). Kazakhstan presents a uniquely compelling object of scholarly inquiry in this regard: the multiethnic, multilingual social fabric inherited from the Soviet era has, since 1991, been systematically reconstituted through a fundamentally new normative-ideological matrix. The most transparent and consequential dimension of this reconstitution is the deliberate expansion of the state language's domain within public life, coupled with the comprehensive promotion of a normative civic model under the auspices of the 'Adal Azamat' concept.

The scholarly and political urgency of this nexus is particularly acute in Kazakhstan, where state-directed linguistic transformation has proceeded simultaneously with the construction of a post-Soviet national identity. Post-Soviet nation-building scholarship has increasingly recognized that language policy is not a neutral administrative instrument but a constitutive mechanism through which states encode normative expectations of citizenship (Pavlenko, 2008; Spolsky, 2004). Despite a growing body of research on language ideology and identity in Central Asia (Dave, 2007; Fierman, 2006; Smagulova, 2008), the empirical relationship between measurable linguistic practice and the internalization of a specific, state-codified civic normative framework has remained insufficiently studied.

Language reform in Kazakhstan unfolds across several historically distinct phases. The inaugural phase (1991–2001) was characterized by the conferral of official status upon the state language; the second (2001–2012) by the elaboration of targeted state programs for language acquisition. The pivotal inflection point arrived in 2017, when President Nursultan Nazarbayev issued the directive to transition to the Latin script, simultaneously initiating the 'Rukhani Zhangyru' (Spiritual Revival) modernization program. In the years that followed, the 'Adal Azamat' concept – understood as a cluster of normative behavioral standards encompassing linguistic responsibility, preservation of national cultural heritage, civic engagement, respect for the rule of law, and the cultivation of social solidarity – came to occupy the very center of civic education discourse (Akhmetova & Suleimenov, 2021; Nurmakhambetov, 2022).

The 'Adal Azamat' concept ('Honest Citizen') draws on Abai's teaching about the 'Perfect Man' (Tolyq Adam). The concept gained prominence in President Tokayev's address to the nation on 1 September 2023, when data collection for this study began. It was subsequently incorporated into a unified educational program formally approved under the Adal Azamat name in 2025. In this article, the concept is operationalized through five normative dimensions: linguistic responsibility (whereby the acquisition of the Kazakh language is equated with civic duty), fidelity to cultural tradition, respect for legality, shared veneration of state symbols, and commitment to social cohesion. This five-part structure is an analytical operationalization adopted for measurement and not an official list of the components of the concept.

The scholarly literature that bridges linguistic resocialization and civic identity formation comprises three principal currents. The first encompasses works

devoted to analyzing the phenomenon of 'linguistic nationalism' in post-Soviet nation-states (Billig, 1995; Pavlenko, 2008). The second integrates linguistic ideology with socialization theory (Gal & Irvine, 2019; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). The third consists of empirical investigations into the relationship between language reform and identity in specific post-Soviet contexts (Dave, 2007; Fierman, 2006; Smagulova, 2008). Among Kazakhstan-focused contributions, the collaborative work of Zharkynbekova et al. (2025), the monograph by Duiisen and Nyssanov (2020), and the research of Akhmetova and Suleimenov (2021) hold particular prominence. Taken together, these currents have treated language practice, language ideology, and civic identity largely as separate objects. What is still missing is a model that links them to a specific, state-codified normative framework and that allows the depth of internalization to differ across identifiable groups of speakers.

The primary research question guiding this work is the following: does the level and character of linguistic resocialization facilitate the internalization of the normative elements of the 'Adal Azamat' concept? If so, what are the mechanisms underlying this facilitation?

The research hypotheses were formulated at three levels. The first hypothesis (H_1) states that citizens who engage in active communicative practice in the state language internalize the normative code of the 'Adal Azamat' concept at a statistically significant and meaningfully higher level. The second hypothesis (H_2) states that the process of linguistic resocialization can be represented as three ordered stages (a theoretically motivated sequence, which cross-sectional data can support only indirectly) – nominative (acquisition of the linguistic sign), pragmatic (deployment of the language in specific contexts), and axiological (alignment of linguistic norms with a coherent value system). The third hypothesis (H_3) states that respondents who have reached the axiological stage exhibit significantly higher levels of internalization than respondents at the earlier stages, both on the overall scale and on each of the five sub-indicators of the 'Adal Azamat' concept.

The present study pursues four interrelated objectives: (1) to empirically establish the relationship between the level of linguistic practice in the Kazakh language and the degree of internalization of the 'Adal Azamat' civic normative framework; (2) to construct and empirically examine a three-stage model of linguistic resocialization applicable to the Kazakhstani sociocultural context; (3) to test a statistical mediation pathway through which linguistic resocialization may translate into civic norm adoption; and (4) to generate evidence-based recommendations for the integration of axiological components into state language programs and civic education curricula.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic Ideology and Civic Identity: Theoretical Framework

Since Silverstein (1979) introduced the concept of linguistic ideology into scholarly circulation, it has developed into a theoretical framework for studying the mutual relationships among power, knowledge, and linguistic practice. The seminal review article by Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) defines linguistic ideology as a constellation of beliefs and sentiments about language – an

ensemble of axiomatic convictions concerning what language is and what it accomplishes for speakers and for society at large.

The conceptual triad advanced by Gal and Irvine (2019) – iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure – offers an indispensable theoretical apparatus for analyzing the rhetoric of language reform in post-Soviet states. Iconization transforms language into a symbolic reflection of the mental and moral qualities of its speakers. Fractal recursivity replicates intragroup distinctions through analogous schemes generated by intergroup oppositions. Erasure ideologically conceals the existence or significance of particular linguistic communities.

In their research on language in the context of globalization, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) made considerable advances in theorizing the ‘linguistic repertoire’ – the sum total of an individual’s concrete linguistic resources – as a constitutive element of civic identity. Their argument holds that the linguistic repertoire is fashioned not exclusively through state language schooling but through the full range of informal communicative spaces.

Language Reform and Identity in the Post-Soviet Context

Pavlenko (2008), in her work on language reform across post-Soviet states, analyzes post-Soviet multilingualism through the paired processes of language revival and language removal. In the Kazakhstani context, Dave (2007) authored one of the earliest monographic investigations linking ‘Kazakhness’ – Kazakh identity – with language reform, characterizing the transformation of Kazakh language acquisition into a marker of ethnic citizenship as ‘ethnolinguistic nationalism.’

Fierman (2006), examining language policy in Kazakhstan, describes language reform as a modernization project whose outcomes resist confident prediction, demonstrating that its positive influence on the consolidation of civic unity is conditional upon specific structural prerequisites. Smagulova (2008), drawing on research conducted in Almaty and Astana alongside rural regions, established that the outcomes of language reform vary sharply according to demographic profile.

Among Kazakhstani scholars, Zharkynbekova et al. (2025) examined – through a quantitative-qualitative mixed-methods approach – the linguistic practices that transform the ethnolinguistic identity of student youth. Their results reveal a positive, though moderate, statistical association between the frequency of linguistic practice and civic identity ($r = 0.43$, $p < .01$). Akhmetova and Suleimenov (2021), analyzing the cultural identity discourse within the ‘Rukhani Zhangyru’ program, placed the axiological role of the linguistic component at the forefront of their argument.

Linguistic Resocialization: Theory and Empirical Evidence

The classical work by Berger and Luckmann (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality*, identifies language as the ‘preeminent sign system,’ arguing that it constitutes the most potent symbolic apparatus for securing the objectivation and institutionalization of reality. Resocialization theory – understood as the process of replacing behavioral schemata acquired during primary socialization with a new normative system – furnishes an applicable framework for interpreting the societal consequences of language reform.

Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative rationality treats linguistic practice as the primary mechanism through which civic community takes form. Within this perspective, civic dialogue conducted in the Kazakh language constitutes the practical channel through which the normative code of the 'Adal Azamat' concept is internalized.

Recent sociological work in the Eurasian Research Journal approaches identity from adjacent angles. Seitakhmetova and Zhandossova (2025) examined the relationship between digitalization and religious identity, and Muminov's (2023) comparison of Russian, Turkish, and Kazakh Eurasianism offers a platform for studying how national identity is constructed discursively in the Kazakhstani context. Neither study addresses language practice directly, but together they show that collective identity in Kazakhstan is built through discourse, which is the premise on which the present study examines language practice and civic norms.

Theoretical Integration: From Language Socialization to a Three-Stage Model

The three-stage model examined here draws on four bodies of theory, each of which accounts for a different layer of the process. Research on language socialization holds that people acquire a language and, through the same activity, the values, stances, and identities that the language carries (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). This tradition supplies the basic claim that linguistic and normative learning are intertwined, but it was developed mainly for childhood and for small communities, and it says little about how adults who already hold other normative repertoires take up a state-codified framework. Here the theory of secondary socialization and resocialization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) becomes useful, because it describes how individuals first acquire the vocabulary of a new social order and then gradually come to treat its meanings as their own.

Each stage is tied to a distinct mechanism. The nominative stage corresponds to acquiring the linguistic code and the vocabulary through which the civic order is named (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The pragmatic stage corresponds to using that code in communicative action, where norms are tested, negotiated, and shared in concrete interactions (Habermas, 1984). The axiological stage corresponds to the point at which language practice becomes linked with a person's own values and sense of belonging, so that speaking the language is experienced as an expression of the self and not as an outside demand. Two frameworks give this last step a precise meaning. Kelman (1958) distinguished compliance, identification, and internalization as qualitatively different bases for adopting a norm, and self-determination theory describes internalization as a continuum from externally regulated behavior to behavior fully integrated with the self (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Gal and Irvine's (2019) concept of iconization adds the ideological side: when a language comes to stand for the moral qualities of its speakers, using it acquires civic meaning.

Two important qualifications should be considered. First, these theories motivate an ordering of stages, not a fixed timetable: people may move back and forth, skip a stage, or remain at one indefinitely. Second, models of identity development (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966) show that exploration and commitment can be assessed at a single point in time, and this is the logic adopted here, in which

profiles are inferred from the joint distribution of practice and internalization and not from observed change. The model is therefore offered as a falsifiable heuristic, and the "*Testing H₂: The Three Stages of Linguistic Resocialization*" section states what the data can and cannot say about sequence.

Research Gaps and the Study's Contribution

The review identified several substantial gaps in the scholarly discourse. First, empirical studies linking language reform with the state's specific normative civic program – in this case, the 'Adal Azamat' concept – are insufficient. Second, the stages of the linguistic resocialization process and their relationship to axiological norms remain inadequately theorized. Third, the nexus between Kazakhstan's rural-urban contrast and the linguistic-normative identity matrix has not been sufficiently investigated. These three lacunae define the scholarly contribution of the present work, which is stated more precisely below.

Compared with earlier work, the study differs in three ways. Previous Kazakhstani research has measured the association between language use and ethnolinguistic or civic identity in general terms (Zharkynbekova et al., 2025), described language attitudes and use across regions (Smagulova, 2008), or analyzed policy and cultural discourse (Akhmetova & Suleimenov, 2021; Dave, 2007; Fierman, 2006). To our knowledge, none of these studies measures the internalization of a specific state-codified normative framework, distinguishes degrees or modes of internalization, or tests whether the link between language practice and norm internalization differs between urban and rural settings. The present study addresses these three points. It should be regarded as a first empirical test of the proposed model and not as a definitive one.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study is grounded in constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemological stance. Constructivist ontology proceeds from the axiom that linguistic identity is not a naturally given object but rather a dynamic process continuously reconstituted through social practice and state discourse (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Interpretivist epistemology aims to disclose the subjective meaning of the research object concurrently with its quantitative measurement. This philosophical tandem underpins the choice of a mixed-methods approach – specifically, the convergent parallel design.

Under this convergent parallel design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously yet independently, and subsequently merged during a convergent interpretation phase (Creswell, 2014). This design enables the study to illuminate not only the externally measurable, statistically tractable surface of linguistic resocialization but also its deeper axiological register.

Quantitative Component: Survey

The quantitative strand was carried out through a questionnaire-based survey. The target population comprised citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan between the ages of 18 and 65. The sample (n = 780) was constructed using stratified quota sampling with random selection within strata. Stratification criteria encompassed region (Almaty, Astana, Shymkent, Oral, Ust-Kamenogorsk), place of residence (urban/rural ratio of 73%/27%), age cohort (18–34, 35–50,

51–65), gender (50%/50%), and educational attainment (higher, secondary vocational, secondary general).

Sampling Procedure

The empirical baseline was established using regional population registers and official household records obtained directly from local executive authorities (akimats) across the designated urban centers. Strata were defined by survey site, residence type, age cohort, gender, and educational attainment, and quotas were set to approximate the population distribution guided by the official demographic indicators published by the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Within strata, respondents were selected by applying a systematic random-route walk methodology originating from randomly determined geographic coordinates. Rural respondents were drawn from agricultural and rural districts immediately adjacent to the primary regional hubs. Data were collected between September and November 2023 by a team of trained field researchers, using face-to-face interviews and digital distribution of the questionnaire in Kazakh and Russian. Of approximately 920 initial contacts, 780 produced completed usable questionnaires (response rate = 84.8%); the remaining cases were excluded because of administrative errors or incomplete scales.

Representativeness

The five sites comprise the three largest cities and two regional centers of the country, so the sample is not a national probability sample. The results therefore describe these settings and should not be generalized to the whole population of Kazakhstan without qualification. The achieved sample was compared with population benchmarks for gender, age, education, residence, and ethnicity, using official demographic yearbooks. Deviations of more than 3.5 percentage points were corrected with post-stratification weights utilizing standard sample-balancing techniques. The regression models were re-estimated with and without weights, and the conclusions did not change, as documented in the auxiliary statistical appendix. Rural residents, older adults, and speakers of minority languages are the groups most likely to be under-covered in surveys of this kind, and the "Limitations and Directions for Future Research" section returns to this point.

The survey instrument comprised four blocks. The first block – the Linguistic Practice Measure (LPM) – consisted of an 18-item scale rated on a Likert format (1–5). The second block – the 'Adal Azamat' Normative Internalization Scale (AANIS) – comprised 22 items measuring five dimensions: linguistic responsibility, cultural fidelity, respect for legality, shared veneration of state symbols, and civic solidarity. The fourth block captured sociodemographic variables.

Item development followed three steps. First, items were drawn from conceptual frameworks established in recent national civic programs and foundational sociological literature. Second, they were reviewed by qualified subject-matter experts (content validity index = 0.94). Third, they were translated between Kazakh, Russian, and English by independent translators, with back-translation and cognitive pretesting conducted during the pilot study.

The Axiological Internalization Index (AII) is a separate measure and is not a re-scoring of the AANIS. The AANIS records how strongly respondents endorse the five normative pillars of 'Adal Azamat', that is, the content and breadth of normative commitment. The AII is intended to capture the mode and depth of that commitment: the extent to which respondents link their use of Kazakh with personal values, a sense of belonging, and obligations they regard as their own and not externally imposed, in line with the distinction between internalization and compliance (Kelman, 1958; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The index consists of 6 items rated on the same 1–5 format, focusing on intrinsic motivation and personal identification with the state language. None of these items belongs to the AANIS, as verified through rigorous item-discrimination tests. In the full sample the AII showed $\alpha = 0.89$ and correlated with the AANIS at $r = 0.68$ (below the level of about .85 at which constructs are usually considered indistinguishable; Kline, 2016) and with the LPM at $r = 0.74$. Stage 3 membership (the "Testing H_2 : The Three Stages of Linguistic Resocialization" section) is a categorical label produced by cluster analysis and should not be confused with the continuous AII score; the two are related (point-biserial $r = 0.79$) but not identical.

Psychometric properties were first examined in a pilot study ($n = 65$) and then re-examined in the full sample. In the pilot, internal reliability was Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$ for the LPM and $\alpha = 0.91$ for the AANIS. In the full sample, reliability was $\alpha = 0.88$ (LPM) and $\alpha = 0.92$ (AANIS), with McDonald's $\omega = 0.89$ and 0.93 , and sub-scale alphas ranged from 0.81 to 0.94. Statistical analysis was performed in SPSS 28.0, including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, hierarchical linear regression (Cohen et al., 2003), mediation analysis (PROCESS macro, Model 4; Hayes, 2018), and factor analysis.

Because internal consistency does not by itself demonstrate validity (Hair et al., 2019), four further kinds of evidence were examined. (a) Structural validity: exploratory factor analysis of the pilot data and confirmatory factor analysis of the main sample conducted via specialized structural equation modeling software tested the intended structure (LPM: three factors; AANIS: five factors). Fit was judged against conventional criteria (CFI and TLI of at least .90 to .95, RMSEA of at most .06 to .08, SRMR of at most .08; Hu & Bentler, 1999), with the results CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.048 (90% CI [0.042, 0.054]), and SRMR = 0.051. (b) Convergent and discriminant validity: average variance extracted (exceeding the 0.50 threshold) and composite reliability (surpassing 0.80 across constructs) were computed for each factor, and the square root of the average variance extracted was compared with the inter-factor correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Because the LPM contains an attitude sub-scale and the AANIS a linguistic responsibility sub-scale, we examined the possible conceptual overlap between them specifically; the correlation between these two sub-scales was $r = 0.62$. (c) Criterion-related evidence: external validation checks demonstrated robust correlations between self-reported language proficiency indices and criterion measures. (d) Method-related evidence: Harman's single-factor test and a marker-variable check for common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003) showed that the first factor explained 24.6% of the variance. Because the moderation analysis compares urban and rural respondents, measurement invariance across these groups was also tested through multi-group confirmatory modeling confirming structural equivalence.

Moderation and mediation were specified as follows. In the regression, LPM and age were mean-centered before the product terms were formed, residence was dummy-coded (urban = 0, rural = 1), maintaining standard binary coding conventions, and the two product terms were entered in a final block after the main effects (Cohen et al., 2003). Conditional (simple) slopes were estimated for urban and rural respondents and for the age cohorts, with 95% confidence intervals, and regions of significance were obtained with the Johnson–Neyman technique. The mediation model (PROCESS Model 4) used the LPM as predictor, the AII as mediator, and the AANIS as outcome, with the sociodemographic variables as covariates. Indirect effects were estimated with 5,000 bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2018). We report the total (c), direct (c'), and indirect (a × b) effects together with paths a and b, standard errors, and confidence intervals. Regression assumptions (linearity, normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity) were checked, and heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors were used where needed, applying robust standard error adjustments where minor variance discrepancies appeared.

Qualitative Component: In-Depth Interviews

The qualitative strand was conducted within a phenomenological-interpretivist framework. The in-depth semi-structured interview corpus (n = 42) was assembled through purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), ensuring maximum structural variation across geographical locations, demographic cohorts, and educational backgrounds. The interview guide comprised five thematic blocks: (1) language biography; (2) contemporary forms and sites of linguistic practice; (3) attitudes toward language reform; (4) the degree of internalization of the 'Adal Azamat' normative framework; and (5) future perspectives on linguistic citizenship. Interview duration ranged from 55 to 90 minutes (mean = 72 min). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (1,420 pages total).

Data analysis followed the reflexive thematic analysis approach of Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019, 2021) and proceeded in six phases. (1) Familiarization: the transcripts were read in full while listening to the recordings, and analytic notes were kept. (2) Coding: the research team coded the corpus in Atlas.ti 23, combining inductive codes for participants' experience of language use with deductive codes for the five pillars of 'Adal Azamat' and the three stages, establishing a comprehensive coding matrix. (3) Generating initial themes by grouping codes around a shared central idea. (4) Reviewing the themes against the coded extracts and against the whole data set. (5) Defining and naming the themes. (6) Writing up, in which extracts were chosen to show the content of a theme and not merely to illustrate frequency. Trustworthiness was secured through member checking (transcripts returned to 14 respondents for confirmation), negative case analysis, and reflexivity sessions. Systematic auditing logs and methodological journals were maintained throughout the qualitative inquiry.

Consistent with the position of Braun and Clarke (2019, 2021), inter-coder agreement was not used to certify the themes, because in reflexive thematic analysis themes are interpretive constructions that depend on the researchers' engagement with the data and are not expected to be reproduced identically by independent coders. Cohen's kappa was calculated only for the more descriptive step on which the counts in the "Integration of Qualitative Data" section depend,

namely the assignment of each transcript to one of the three stages and the identification of references to the five pillars, ensuring internal categorization reliability. Two coders independently classified a subset of the transcripts ($\kappa = 0.84$) and coded the pillar-level categories (median $\kappa = 0.81$ across the evaluated categories), and disagreements were resolved by discussion (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). These coefficients therefore speak to the consistency of the classification and not to the validity of the themes, whose quality was supported by the procedures described next.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample Characteristics

The quantitative sample presented the following profile: mean age 36.4 years (SD = 11.8); gender distribution – female 51.2%, male 48.8%; ethnic composition – Kazakh 72.4%, Russian 15.6%, other ethnicities 12.0%; place of residence – urban 73.1%, rural 26.9%; educational attainment – higher 41.3%, secondary vocational 34.2%, secondary general 24.5%.

Linguistic Practice Measure: Descriptive Results

The mean score on the Linguistic Practice Measure (LPM) was 3.41 (SD = 0.89, possible range 1–5). Sub-scale scores were as follows: Linguistic Frequency Index – 3.68 (SD = 0.92); Linguistic Space Domain – 3.19 (SD = 1.02); Linguistic Attitude Scale – 3.71 (SD = 0.84). Regional variation in linguistic practice levels was statistically significant: $F(4, 775) = 18.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.087$. Linguistic practice levels were significantly higher in rural settings ($M = 3.72$, SD = 0.81) than in urban ones ($M = 3.28$, SD = 0.91): $t(778) = 6.87$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.51$.

'Adal Azamat' Normative Internalization: Results

The overall mean score on the AANIS was 3.56 (SD = 0.82). The sub-scale scores were as follows: linguistic responsibility – 3.78 (SD = 0.79); cultural fidelity – 3.62 (SD = 0.83); respect for legality – 3.71 (SD = 0.77); shared veneration of state symbols – 3.44 (SD = 0.91); civic solidarity – 3.34 (SD = 0.94). The fact that the 'linguistic responsibility' sub-scale returned the highest score across all five dimensions is consistent with the prominent position of the linguistic component within the normative code of the 'Adal Azamat' concept. Because this sub-scale asks about language directly, part of its relationship with the LPM may reflect shared content (see the "Limitations and Directions for Future Research" section).

Testing H_2 : Correlation and Regression

Pearson correlation analysis disclosed the association between the LPM and the AANIS: $r = 0.58$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.52, 0.63] – a moderately strong positive relationship (about 34% shared variance). At the sub-scale level, the strongest association was observed with 'linguistic responsibility': $r = 0.67$, $p < .001$. Hierarchical linear regression was conducted in three blocks. Block 1 (sociodemographic control variables): $R^2 = 0.12$, $F(6, 773) = 17.58$, $p < .001$. Block 2 (LPM entered as predictor): $\Delta R^2 = 0.22$, $\Delta F(1, 772) = 214.63$, $p < .001$; standardized beta: $\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$. Block 3 (interaction terms): the linguistic practice $\times$ place of residence interaction proved significant, $\beta = -0.14$, $p = .003$. Final model: $R^2 = 0.37$, $F(9, 770) = 48.92$, $p < .001$. H_1 was supported: after

controlling for the sociodemographic variables, linguistic practice remained a substantial predictor of normative internalization, and the interaction results are interpreted below.

The interaction between linguistic practice and place of residence was negative ($B = -0.13$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = -0.14$, $p = .003$; Table 1). Because rural residence was coded 1, this means that the LPM–AANIS slope was flatter in rural than in urban settings, even though rural respondents reported higher levels of practice. The rural slope was therefore lower than the urban slope by 0.13 AANIS scale points per one-point difference in LPM. The interaction with age cohort was small and only marginally significant ($\beta = -0.09$, $p = .041$); because two interaction terms were tested, a Bonferroni-adjusted threshold of $\alpha = .025$ applies, and this effect does not meet it, so it is treated as exploratory. The two interaction terms together added $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$. These estimates describe associations in cross-sectional data and do not show that raising practice would raise internalization by the amounts stated.

Table 1
Hierarchical Regression Analysis: Predictors of ‘Adal Azamat’ Normative Internalization (AANIS)

Predictor	B	SE	β	p
Block 1: Sociodemographic Controls ($R^2 = 0.12$, $F(6, 773) = 17.58$, $p < .001$)				
Age	0.08	0.02	0.11	.003
Gender	0.04	0.05	0.04	.382
Education	0.12	0.04	0.14	.001
Ethnicity (Kazakh)	0.19	0.06	0.17	< .001
Residence (Rural)	0.21	0.06	0.18	< .001
Region	0.09	0.03	0.12	.002
Block 2: Linguistic Practice ($\Delta R^2 = 0.22$, $\Delta F(1, 772) = 214.63$, $p < .001$)				
LPM (composite)	0.57	0.04	0.61	< .001
Block 3: Interaction Terms ($\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $\Delta F(2, 770) = 19.07$, $p < .001$)				
LPM $\times$ Residence	-0.13	0.04	-0.14	.003
LPM $\times$ Age Cohort	-0.06	0.03	-0.09	.041
Final Model: $R^2 = 0.37$, $F(9, 770) = 48.92$, $p < .001$				

Source: B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized coefficient. Predictors were entered in the theoretically specified order. $VIF < 2.8$ for all variables. Residence was coded 0 = urban, 1 = rural; continuous predictors were mean-centered before the product terms were formed; $N = 780$.

Testing H₂: The Three Stages of Linguistic Resocialization

K-means cluster analysis ($k = 3$) was used to examine whether respondents fall into distinct profiles that can be read as the three proposed stages. The composite LPM and AANIS scores entered the clustering as the two input variables. Stage One – ‘Nominative Acquisition’ ($n = 201$, 25.8%): LPM mean 2.31 ($SD = 0.57$), AANIS mean 2.84 ($SD = 0.69$). Representative response: ‘I do speak Kazakh, but I wouldn’t say it has anything to do with being a good citizen’ (Stage 1 participant). Stage Two — ‘Pragmatic Appropriation’ ($n = 361$, 46.3%): LPM mean 3.57 ($SD = 0.62$), AANIS mean 3.61 ($SD = 0.71$). Stage Three — ‘Axiological Internalization’ ($n = 218$, 27.9%): LPM mean 4.39 ($SD = 0.51$), AANIS mean 4.47 ($SD = 0.54$). Representative response: ‘When I speak Kazakh, it’s not just a language I’m using. I feel who I am, where I was born, and I feel proud to belong to this country’ (Stage 3 participant). H_2 is therefore supported in a limited sense: the three profiles differ clearly and in the expected order, but the order is an interpretation, as discussed below.

Table 2
Cluster Profiles of Linguistic Resocialization Stages (k-means, $k = 3$)

Stage	n (%)	LPM M (SD)	AANIS M (SD)	% Rural	% Kazakh
Stage 1: Nominative Acquisition	201 (25.8%)	2.31 (0.57)	2.84 (0.69)	17.4%	48.3%
Stage 2: Pragmatic Appropriation	361 (46.3%)	3.57 (0.62)	3.61 (0.71)	26.6%	71.7%
Stage 3: Axiological Internalization	218 (27.9%)	4.39 (0.51)	4.47 (0.54)	38.5%	88.1%

Source: LPM = Linguistic Practice Measure; AANIS = ‘Adal Azamat’ Normative Internalization Scale. All between-cluster differences were statistically significant at $p < .001$ (Tukey HSD). Scales were scored on a 1–5 Likert scale.

Interpreting the Profiles as Stages

The reading of the clusters as stages rests on three kinds of support. First, the profiles are ordered in the same direction on both the LPM and the AANIS. Second, the ordering matches the theoretical sequence set out in the “*Theoretical Integration: From Language Socialization to a Three-Stage Model*” section, from acquiring the code, through using it, to integrating it with personal values. Third, the qualitative data show a parallel shift in vocabulary across the stages (the “*Integration of Qualitative Data*” section). Table 2 also shows that the share of rural respondents and of ethnic Kazakhs rises across the profiles, so part of the gradient may reflect who is in each group and not only how far a person has progressed.

The same reading has four limits. (a) The design is cross-sectional: nobody was observed moving from one profile to another, so ‘stage’ denotes a position along a gradient and not a verified developmental step, and the same pattern could arise if the profiles were stable types of speakers. (b) Because the LPM and the AANIS both entered the clustering, between-cluster differences on

these variables are produced partly by the procedure itself, and the analysis of variance in the "*Testing H_3* " section is therefore descriptive and not an independent test. (c) The choice of $k = 3$ follows the three-stage model. Formal comparison of alternative cluster solutions and stability checks (for example split-half replication or latent profile analysis) are not reported in this article and are needed before the profiles are treated as robust. (d) The profiles were not validated against an external criterion. For these reasons the stage model is presented as a hypothesis-generating description, and longitudinal designs, for example latent transition analysis of repeated measures, are needed to test the sequence.

Testing H_3

A one-way analysis of variance comparing AANIS means across the three clusters yielded (as a descriptive check; see the "*Testing H_2 : The Three Stages of Linguistic Resocialization*" section): $F(2, 777) = 218.43, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.36$. Post-hoc Tukey HSD tests confirmed that differences between all three cluster pairs were statistically significant (all $p < .001$). Mediation analysis (PROCESS macro, Model 4) was used to test whether the Axiological Internalization Index (AII; the "*Quantitative Component: Survey*" section) accounts for the LPM–AANIS association: indirect effect $\beta = 0.34, 95\% \text{BCa CI } [0.28, 0.41]$; the direct effect was no longer significant at the .05 level, $\beta = 0.12, p = .067$ (total effect $c = []$; path $a = []$; path $b = []$; proportion mediated = $[]\%$). A non-significant direct effect is not evidence that the true direct effect is zero, and with $n = 780$ a p value of .067 leaves room for a small residual effect. The pattern is therefore described as consistent with substantial, and possibly complete, mediation and not as proof of full mediation. The total effect implied by the mediation model ($0.34 + 0.12 = 0.46$) is smaller than the Table 1 coefficient ($\beta = 0.61$); the two figures come from different model specifications, so the mediation estimates are interpreted as indicative of the pathway only. H_3 was supported for the overall AANIS score. H_3 also concerned the five sub-indicators; because the sub-scale comparisons across the three profiles are not reported here, H_3 is regarded as supported only for the overall score. The mediation analysis cannot establish temporal order, because the LPM, the AII, and the AANIS were measured at one time point, and cross-sectional mediation estimates can differ substantially from longitudinal ones (Maxwell & Cole, 2007).

Integration of Qualitative Data

Thematic analysis identified three principal themes. The first – 'Linguistic Honor' – captures respondents' reception of language acquisition as a personal ethical stance. The second – 'The Political Geography of Linguistic Space' – reveals how state discourse, channeled through language, maps the territory of linguistic belonging and civic commonality. The third – 'Normative Impetus' – shows that concrete elements of the 'Adal Azamat' framework are perceived as the normative extension of linguistic belonging. In the qualitative utterances of respondents at the nominative acquisition stage, axiologically charged words such as 'responsibility,' 'pride,' and 'commonality' were almost entirely absent. Conversely, 91.3% of respondents ($n = 21$ of 23) at the axiological internalization stage connected their linguistic practice directly with at least three of the five pillars of the 'Adal Azamat' framework.

Theme 1: Linguistic Honor

For participants who described Kazakh as a personal ethical stance, using the language was something owed to oneself and to one's family and community. A Stage 3 participant put it this way: 'When I speak Kazakh, it's not just a language I'm using. I feel who I am, where I was born, and I feel proud to belong to this country.' By contrast, a Stage 1 participant separated language use from civic belonging: 'I do speak Kazakh, but I wouldn't say it has anything to do with being a good citizen.'

Theme 2: The Political Geography of Linguistic Space

This theme concerns how state discourse, channeled through language, marks out who belongs to the civic community and where Kazakh is expected to be used. [Excerpt 3: insert a quotation, with participant code and characteristics, that shows how a participant locates places or situations (for example workplace, school, public services) as spaces where Kazakh is or is not expected.]

Theme 3: Normative Impetus

Here concrete elements of the 'Adal Azamat' framework are described as a natural extension of belonging to the language community. [Excerpt 4: insert a quotation linking language practice to one or more of the five pillars.] [Excerpt 5, a negative case: insert a quotation from a Stage 3 participant who does not link language practice with the pillars, and one sentence explaining how this case was handled in the analysis.]

The shift from absent to present axiological vocabulary across the stages parallels the rise in AANIS scores across the profiles (2.84, 3.61, and 4.47), which is the pattern the stage interpretation would predict. The same pattern would also arise if the profiles were stable types of speakers, so the qualitative data support the ordering of the profiles but not, by themselves, the claim of movement from one profile to the next. The two strands agreed on the order of the profiles: axiological vocabulary was almost absent at Stage 1 and prominent at Stage 3. The interviews also extended the profiles, because they show that what sets the third profile apart is not only more frequent use of Kazakh but a different way of talking about it, in terms of honor, belonging, and obligation, which the scales capture only indirectly.

Theoretical Interpretation of the Findings

The findings are consistent with several theoretical propositions, although they bear on them to different degrees. The applicability of Berger and Luckmann's linguistic objectivation theory in the post-Soviet Kazakhstani context receives support: higher linguistic practice goes together with a stronger sense that the normative code of the 'Adal Azamat' concept is binding, which is what an objectivation account would lead one to expect, although a correlational design cannot show that practice produces this sense. The empirical data are consonant with Habermas's communicative rationality theory in its characterization of linguistic practice as the practical channel through which civic community arises. Gal and Irvine's iconization concept offers a plausible reading of the high 'linguistic responsibility' scores: to the extent that state discourse presents the use of Kazakh as a sign of civic virtue, practice and norm endorsement would

be expected to move together. The present data do not measure state discourse directly, so this remains an interpretation.

Relation to Earlier Empirical Studies

The association between practice and internalization ($r = .58$) is larger than the one reported by Zharkynbekova et al. (2025) for student youth ($r = .43$). Several differences between the studies could account for this: the present sample is an adult sample with a wider range of age and education, the outcome is a measure of a specific normative framework and not of general ethnolinguistic identity, and the LPM contains an attitude sub-scale that is conceptually close to the outcome and may raise the correlation (the "*Limitations and Directions for Future Research*" section). The regional and rural–urban differences agree in direction with Smagulova's (2008) finding that the outcomes of language policy depend on demographic profile, and with Fierman's (2006) argument that the civic effects of language reform depend on structural conditions. The positive coefficient for Kazakh ethnicity ($\beta = 0.17$) in the sociodemographic block echoes Dave's (2007) description of Kazakh as a marker tied to ethnic belonging. It suggests that the 'Adal Azamat' framework, as measured here, may be received differently by respondents who do not identify as Kazakh, and the stage model should be tested separately among ethnic Russians and other non-Kazakh groups, although the relatively small sizes of these subsamples (15.6% and 12.0%, respectively) permit only tentative conclusions.

The rural-urban moderation effect ($\beta = -0.14$, $p = .003$) warrants substantive interpretation. Rural respondents exhibit higher mean LPM scores ($M = 3.72$) than their urban counterparts ($M = 3.28$), yet the negative interaction term indicates that, with rural residence coded 1, the LPM–AANIS slope is flatter among them than among urban respondents. One plausible reading is that in rural settings Kazakh is used more widely for routine reasons, so that frequency of use carries less information about value commitment than it does in cities, where using Kazakh is more often a deliberate choice. This explanation was not tested. The higher rural practice scores are compatible with Smagulova's (2008) observation that the outcomes of language reform differ sharply by demographic profile. The more specific idea that informal communicative ecologies generate deeper socialization effects than formal instruction is offered here as a hypothesis for future work and not as an established finding.

The mediation result, in which the direct effect of LPM on AANIS is no longer significant once axiological internalization is controlled ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = .067$), is consistent with the view that practice matters for civic norms largely to the extent that it is linked with personal values, which would fit a staged account of civic socialization. The construct of axiological internalization, operationalized through the composite Axiological Internalization Index, is a candidate mechanism for the 'Adal Azamat' socialization process. Testing it requires longitudinal or experimental designs and evidence that the AII and the AANIS are empirically distinct (the "*Quantitative Component: Survey*" section).

Theoretical Contribution

The study contributes in three ways, and the contribution is incremental. First, it connects the language socialization tradition with the sociological and psychological treatment of internalization by measuring internalization as a

variable that differs among respondents and not only as a theoretical process. Second, it offers a stage model that can be falsified, with explicit statements of what cross-sectional data can and cannot show about sequence. Third, it identifies residence as a boundary condition for the link between language practice and civic norm internalization, which earlier work on Kazakhstan had not examined with a measure of a specific state-codified framework.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations qualify the findings. The design is cross-sectional, so neither the stage sequence nor the mediation pathway can be tested in time. All measures are self-reported, and because 'Adal Azamat' is a state-promoted framework, social desirability may have raised the endorsement scores; common method variance is a further risk (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The LPM attitude sub-scale and the AANIS linguistic responsibility sub-scale overlap in content, which may inflate their association. The cluster solution was derived from variables that also serve as the outcome in later tests, which limits the inferential weight of the between-cluster comparisons. The sample covers five sites, includes a minority of rural respondents (26.9%), and contains smaller groups of Russian speakers and of other ethnic groups, so generalization to the whole country, and conclusions about non-Kazakh groups, are limited. Future studies should use longitudinal panels and latent transition models to follow the same individuals across profiles, test measurement invariance across language and ethnic groups, replicate the model with a national probability sample, and evaluate civic-education modules with comparison groups.

CONCLUSION

This study offers empirical evidence, from a five-site survey and in-depth interviews, of a positive and statistically significant association between linguistic resocialization in Kazakhstan and the internalization of the civic normative code promoted through the 'Adal Azamat' concept. Because the data are cross-sectional, the association should not be read as causal.

First, linguistic practice emerged as the strongest predictor of 'Adal Azamat' normative internalization ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$), supporting H_1 . The strongest correlation at the sub-scale level – with 'linguistic responsibility' ($r = 0.67$) – suggests that the normative side of language reform deserves explicit attention.

Second, the three-stage model of linguistic resocialization – nominative acquisition, pragmatic appropriation, axiological internalization – received preliminary empirical support as a description of three profiles ordered in the expected direction. The sequence itself remains an interpretation that longitudinal work must test. Used with caution, the profiles may help to describe differences among speakers, but they should be validated further before they are used for diagnosis or for targeting programs.

Third, respondents assigned to the axiological internalization profile scored higher on the overall AANIS, providing descriptive support for H_3 at the overall scale level (the comparisons on the five pillars are not reported here). The mediation analysis was consistent with a pathway from linguistic practice to civic norms through axiological internalization, although this cannot be confirmed without longitudinal data.

Practical Recommendations

For designers of state language programs, it is recommended that axiological modules – integrated with the five dimensions used to operationalize the ‘Adal Azamat’ concept in this study – be incorporated into the content of language courses. For civic education practitioners, greater attention should be given to the potential advantages of informal linguistic practice environments.

These recommendations have limits. Modules that connect the use of Kazakh with learners’ own values and with concrete civic situations (for example community projects or discussion of the ‘Adal Azamat’ pillars in Kazakh) are reasonable to pilot, because the third profile is distinguished by value-laden talk about language, but their effects should be evaluated against a comparison group before wider adoption. In rural settings, where practice is already high but less closely tied to norm endorsement, the emphasis could shift from the amount of practice to its meaning and purpose. Because the framework presents language use as a civic duty, programs should also be designed so that citizens who do not speak Kazakh fluently are not positioned as lacking civic commitment, and their effect on these citizens’ sense of belonging should be monitored.

In final summation, this study adds to the understanding of language reform not only as a functional linguistic project but also as a setting in which civic norms may be learned and valued. The findings suggest that attention to the value dimension of language practice could strengthen the civic aims of language programs; whether it does so remains to be shown in longitudinal and intervention studies.

Ethical Commission Approval

Conducted at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, the study examined linguistic socialization and civic identity, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and ethical compliance (Protocol No. 14, September 8, 2023).

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study.

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