

B.A. Zhetpisbayeva¹, L.S. Syrymbetova², T.Yu. Shelestova¹

¹*Ye.A. Buketov Karaganda State University, Kazakhstan;*

²*Trilingual education center of Altynsarin National Academy of Education, Astana, Kazakhstan
(E-mail: shelestova2009@mail.ru)*

Teaching English to young learners within new requirements of primary education in Kazakhstan

This research briefly introduces the education system in Kazakhstan, mentioning the recent changes in primary education. Early foreign language teaching has been accorded much importance in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the last years. Its importance increases in the Kazakhstan context and with the ideas of trilingual education. The authors examine the recent changes in primary education, focus on policy efforts directed towards improving the quality of English learning and teaching, mentioning the aims and expectations in the Curriculum. Despite the major progress that has been made in early English language teaching in Kazakhstan many problems still remain to be tackled and deserve serious attention from policymakers.

Keywords: early learning a foreign language, English, primary school, formation of communicative competence, improving the quality of teaching.

The development of the education system is a priority for Kazakhstan, as investment in education is key to the well-being of society as a whole. Education, which constitutes a major investment into human capital, is also a key driver of economic growth. In an integrated dynamic global market place, education systems must continually improve and work to adapt to changing circumstances [1]. The State Programme of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011- 2020 (SPED) is the foundation document driving education reform in the country. In the message of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbaev to the people of Kazakhstan “Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050, New political course of the established state” one of the priority is the role of education in the development of Kazakhstan society [2].

Funding language learning in Kazakhstan is one of essential issues in implementing the Trinity of Languages program in the country, but is not as urgent as the challenge of improving the quality of language teaching and language learning.

Early foreign language education has become a priority issue on the agenda of Kazakhstan government with central government agencies and ministries committed to promoting it nationwide. Commitment to multilingualism, the attention to the development of intercultural competences and their contribution towards building Kazakhstan citizenship, as well as the insistence on life-learning as an essential concept in Kazakhstan’s new educational policy, have made early language learning a focal point in Kazakhstan programmes and actions [3].

The main aim of English language teaching is to provide them with a communicative competence which means useful language knowledge. It also means the capability of using the language in a suitable way in a given situation. This competence can be assessed through the basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Improving foreign language competence means that by the end of compulsory education students are able to use one or two foreign languages in private, educational, professional and civic contexts. Students are to acquire a positive attitude towards language learning, foreign languages and cultures. Language learning is a part of life-long learning programmes, therefore students are to be able to maintain, improve their language knowledge and learn other languages as well.

The situation with language teaching and learning in Kazakhstan is becoming even more challenging now than it has been before. In 2012-2013 academic year in 165 Kazakhstani schools they started the experiment on introducing English classes into the curricula of the Grade 2 (7-8 year old) students and according to the modified State Compulsory Education Standard (SCES) the first-graders will start learning English in 2013-2014 academic year. Moreover, a pilot project on implementing English as the language of instruction within some school subjects was launched in September 2013. There have been any major policy changes in the last three years, for example with regard to the status of English in primary schools (Table 1).

Table 1

Main policy changes with regard to the status of English

Policy changes
1. Lowering the age of starting English in all or part of the context
2. English teaching affected by general educational reform
3. Making English compulsory at primary level
4. Introduction of more overt standard setting/assessment
5. English to be made the vehicle for other curricular subjects

Following these changes Cambridge English Language Assessment, together with Cambridge International Examinations and the Cambridge University Faculty of Education, is currently undertaking a curriculum development programme for the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) in Kazakhstan.

NIS, a group of state-funded, highly selective schools for students aged from 5 to 18, was established to educate the future intellectual elite of Kazakhstan in a tri-lingual environment, with teaching delivered in Kazakh, Russian and English. The Cambridge team was working with NIS to develop education and curriculum standards, and teacher support and assessment.

The project began in 2011, with an initial focus on the development of a curriculum and assessment model, the production of a curriculum framework, and the delivery of a subject-mapping exercise for maths, English and science. The Cambridge team then extended the project's scope to ensure that the proposed curriculum and assessments for English as a Second Language were fit for purpose. The team evaluated the existing curriculum framework, and provided support for the mapping exercise, which formed a key part of the evaluation process. The project, which is likely to continue until at least 2017 (contracts are agreed on a calendar year basis), is now centred on the wider support and training required to deliver the revised curriculum, and will include a further review and revision of individual subject programmes.

The Cambridge team is also supporting NIS in the development of course plans for each grade (Grades 1 to 12) and a training programme to enable teachers to implement the new subject programmes, and providing 'off the shelf' assessments to meet an immediate need for summative assessment.

As a result, the University collaboration has delivered the broad-ranging curriculum development NIS requires, while also enabling NIS to achieve its key objective of educating its students using a trilingual model.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan defines the new principles and aims of trilingual education and teaching Languages (Kazakh, Russian and English) in Primary schools. English language teaching is compulsorily introduced in the Grade 1 and lasts till the end of compulsory education (it means students should learn at least one foreign language from the age of seven till the age of seventeen/eighteen). English has been included into "The Language and Literature educational field" in State Compulsory Education Standard. New updated Curriculum was launched.

In the new curriculum, there have been some changes mostly related to the need for developing communicative competence in English. The curriculum was organized on two axes: Instructional design and assessment in language teaching. Within these axes, the recent curriculum emphasized listening and speaking over reading and writing. Thus, in the first grade literacy skills are not included; reading and writing are introduced at the second grade only. Moreover, the recent curriculum emphasizes intercultural communication and suggests the integration of cultural content to the thematic units [4].

In 2016 NIS together with Altynsarin National academy of education developed educational program for subject "English language" for Primary school (Grades 1-4) within the context of renew content of education. There was developed requirements to knowledge and skills for levels of proficiency in English, presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Requirements for levels of proficiency in English

Grade	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
1	2	3	4	5
Grade 1 working towards A1	- recognises short instructions for basic classroom routines spoken slowly and distinctly; - recognises with considerable	- makes basic personal statements and simple statements about objects; - begins to use intonation to signal questions in basic exchanges;	- recognises initial letters in names and places;	

1	2	3	4	5
	<p>support a few basic personal questions spoken slowly and distinctly;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognises with support simple greetings <p>recognise the spoken form of a limited range of basic and everyday classroom words;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognises basic intonation distinguishing questions from statements; - begins to recognise the sounds of phonemes and phoneme blends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pronounces basic words and expressions intelligibly; - responds to very basic supported personal questions; - produces words in response to prompts; - exchanges simple greetings and say “please”, “sorry” and “thank you” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognises some very high-frequency words from local environment. 	
Grade 2 Low A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognises short basic instructions for a limited range of classroom routines spoken slowly and distinctly; - recognises with support a limited range of basic common personal questions spoken slowly and distinctly; - recognises with support common names and names of places, spoken form of a limited range of everyday and classroom words; - recognises with support short basic questions about what something is; - recognises the sounds of phonemes and phoneme blends. 	<p>Monologue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes basic personal statements about people, objects and classroom routines. <p>Dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes introductions and requests in basic interactions with others; - asks questions in basic exchanges about people, objects and classroom routines; - responds shortly in interactions with others; - can give simple instructions for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognises sounds and names the letters of the alphabet; - recognises and identifies some familiar sight words from local environment; - can use alphabet and put the words in alphabetical order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - traces letters in the air visually and correctly.
Grade 3 Mid A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understands a range of short basic supported classroom instructions; - recognises with considerable support an increasing range of common personal questions; - understands the main points of short, slow and carefully articulated talk on routine and familiar topics features such as colour and number; - understands some specific information in short, slow, carefully articulated talk on routine and familiar topics; - can find contextual clues to predict content in short, supported talk on routine and familiar topics. 	<p>Monologue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes basic statements related to personal information, people and objects on familiar topics and classroom routines; - articulates clearly the difference between various sounds; - can place stress correctly on familiar polysyllabic words; - gives simple instructions for others; <p>Dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asks questions in order to satisfy basic needs and find information on familiar topics and classroom routines; - uses a limited range of basic words, phrases and short sentences to describe objects, activities and classroom routines; - uses short answers appropriately in short, basic exchanges and take turns when speaking with others in a limited range of short, basic exchanges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can read and spell out words; - reads and follow with considerable support simple, words, phrases and sentences on familiar and general topics and familiar instructions for classroom activities; - begins to use with support a simple picture dictionary; - understands the main points of simple sentences on familiar topics by using contextual clues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - writes with support short responses at phrase level to questions and other prompts; - writes letters and familiar high frequency words; - recognises the words in the letter meant people, places, objects and personal, objective pronouns - Forms of the verbs in -Present Simple, -Present Cont-s - Have got + - nouns - question How many are them? - modal verb - can - prepositions of places and time - would like+noun like + verb + ing
Grade 4 High A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understands short supported classroom instructions in an increasing range of classroom routines; - understands a limited range of short supported questions which ask for personal information; - understands short, narratives on a limited range of general and some curricular topics; 	<p>Monologue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes basic statements on a limited range of general topics; - gives short, basic description of people and objects on a limited range of curricular topics; <p>Dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asks questions to find out about present experiences on a limited range of curricular topics; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognises, identifies and sound with support a limited range of familiar words in simple sentences; - reads and follows with limited support familiar instructions for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plans, writes and checks short sentences with considerable support on a limited range of personal, general and some curricular topics; - can writes upper and lower case letters

1	2	3	4	5
	- understands some specific information and detail of short, supported information.	- responds to questions on a limited range of curricular topics; - can give instructions; - takes turns when speaking with others in a short, basic exchanges.	classroom activities, short fictions;- reads and understands main points of short simple texts on a limited range using contextual clues.	accurately in writing names, places and short sentences during guided writing activities;

The English curriculum aims to provide opportunities for learners to communicate effectively with different audiences. It will achieve this aim through frequent opportunities in the school environment for interaction with peers, teachers and visitors, and through interactive tasks which involve informal and formal spoken and written presentations. There will also be a focus on out-of-school interaction with learners communicating online and face-to face with speakers of English from other cultures.

Learners should become innovative, critical and creative thinkers by actively participating in a learning environment which encourages objective analysis of subject matter and language content to support arguments with evidence and examples, to use language imaginatively, and to develop strong 'learning to learn' skills. The study of English using the methods described in the English subject programme should enable learners to articulate their ideas with confidence and clarity to different audiences and enable them to reflect on how they can make a positive contribution to Kazakhstani society [5].

The English curriculum defines a minimal level that should be reached by the end of the main phases of education (4th, 9th and 12th grades). These levels correlate with the levels of the Common European Framework. At primary level, according to the Curriculum, everybody is to reach A1 level by the end of the primary education. The number of English language lessons in primary education according to the Curriculum is twice a week, whereas in prior Curriculum it covers ones weekly.

The English language proficiency benchmarks presented in this article are intended to facilitate the design and delivery of English language support for non-English-speaking pupils in Kasakhstani primary schools.

Ultimately the benchmarks derive from the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Cambridge University Press, 2001), which distinguishes five communicative skills – listening, spoken interaction, spoken production, reading, writing – and six levels of proficiency – A1 (Breakthrough), A2 (Waystage), B1 (Threshold), B2 (Vantage), C1 (Effective operational proficiency), and C2 (Mastery). Proficiency in each skill is defined at each level by a series of "can do" statements, presented in table 1. However, the primary benchmarks differ from the Common European Framework in three important respects:

1. The primary benchmarks do not describe the full range of English language proficiency achievable by a non-English-speaking students at primary level, but rather specify the minimum proficiency required for full participation in mainstream schooling. For that reason, the benchmarks correspond to the first three levels of the Common European Framework only.

2. Whereas the descriptions in the Common European Framework reflect a trajectory of language learning that typically covers many years of formal education, from young adolescent to mature adult, the primary benchmarks support a process that is developmental as well as pedagogical, and must be as compact as possible if it is to serve the needs of the target group.

3. Whereas the Common European Framework is concerned in the first instance with language learning for general communicative purposes, the primary benchmarks are focused entirely on the communicative needs imposed by the curriculum. This limitation has two consequences. First, the benchmarks are defined in terms of the communicative practices of the primary classroom and major themes of the primary curriculum. And secondly, they take account of the fact that English language support is provided on a withdrawal basis – they are formulated so as to emphasize the importance of providing pupils with the means of continuing to learn English during the many hours that they spend each week in the mainstream class.

These considerations help to explain the structure of what follows. Part I provides two summary scales: the Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency, which are effectively a domain specific interpretation of the first three levels of the self-assessment grid from the Common European Framework (see appendix); and a Global scale of underlying language competence, which draws on the Common European Framework to specify progression in vocabulary, grammar, phonology, and orthography. Part II then elaborates the Global benchmarks in thirteen Units of work that reflect the thematic scope of the primary curriculum.

The primary benchmarks can be used to define the language support teacher's task; assess the proficiency of each non-English-speaking pupil newly admitted to the school; monitor his/her progress; identify the point at which he/she can be fully integrated in the mainstream; select appropriate learning activities and materials.

Today, a lot of teachers in Kazakhstan are faced with difficulties of teaching English to children when the students have a heritage language that is not English and applying the benchmarks to develop proficiency in English in relation to the language demands of the primary curriculum.

In order to help teachers to overcome some difficulties in English teaching and assessment of young learners we suggest to use at the lesson a version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), developed in accordance with new changes in the curriculum and subject programme.

The purpose of the Language Portfolio is to support children who study English as they meet the challenge of learning English in order to participate fully in mainstream education. The Language Portfolio demonstrates and highlights individual achievement and success and, as a result, helps promote self-confident and self-directed learners.

The Language Portfolio is intended for pupils from first class upwards as it involves the use of basic literacy skills. Using the Language Portfolio with pupils in primary education provides a positive and fun-based means of ensuring that the child learns the language that is critical for integration into the mainstream classroom. At the same time, use of the Language Portfolio promotes the growth of self-confidence and self-esteem as the child's active participation in learning provides constant confirmation of the realities of success.

The ELP consists of three parts:

- “Languages I know” – This allows the child to articulate his/her linguistic identity and to set broad learning objectives. It also allows the language support teacher to record a regular assessment of the child's developing proficiency in global terms that are ultimately derived from the Requirements for levels of proficiency in English presented above.
- “My achievements” – This contains a set of self-assessment sheets that correspond to the capacities developed in the units of work. As the child demonstrates (to him/herself as well as to the teacher) that he/she can perform a particular task, he/she records this by colouring in the appropriate icon. In this way, progress is clearly evident to the child, the class teacher and the child's parents. The child's self-assessment in “My achievements” combines with the teacher's assessment in “Languages I know” to provide a profile of the child's language proficiency and learning progress. This should be invaluable to other language support teachers who may subsequently work with the child as well as to mainstream class teachers, school principals and inspectors.
- “My knowledge dossier” – In this part of the ELP the child collects worksheets and other relevant material. The dossier provides practical corroboration of the profile of language proficiency and learning progress recorded in “Languages I know” and “My achievements”.

There are a lot of ideas for classroom activities based on the use of Language Portfolio. Every statement in the Language Portfolio suggests a learning activity. It is not a book of forms and should not be used in this way.

For the teacher, the topics or activities suggested in the Language Portfolio checklists can be used to help plan lessons. All of the themes in the Language Portfolio are strands of the primary curriculum.

At the first language support class, for example, arrange children in a small circle and throw ball to each child in turn. When the child gets the ball, he/she must say “My name is ...” Teacher may have to model this. Distribute LPs to all children from 1st class up. Get children to write in their names (with help as necessary) and the name of the school. The other details will come later as pupils learn colours, where they live etc.

As a conclusion it can be stated that there are positive tendencies in Kazakhstani primary foreign language education. However, there are some areas where further improvements are needed. One of them is the question of equal chances. Although a great number of innovative projects have been introduced, in most cases classroom practices are traditional, and they do not focus on improving efficient language competences. The lack of differentiation in the classroom, the exaggerated number of different teaching programmes and the lack of suitable transition between different levels have a negative effect on the English language knowledge of students in primary school. To improve this situation, efficient and continuous teacher training would be necessary.

Список литературы

- 1 Развитие стратегических направлений реформирования образования Республики Казахстан на 2015-2020. Диагностический отчет. Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education. — Астана: Индигопринт, 2014. — 160 с.
- 2 Послание Президента Республики Казахстан – Лидера нации Н.А. Назарбаева народу Казахстана «Стратегия «Казахстан – 2050: Новый политический курс состоявшегося государства». 14 дек. 2012 г. — [ЭР]. Режим доступа: www.akorda.kz
- 3 Жетписбаева Б.А., Шелестова Т.Ю. Раннее обучение английскому языку как проблема современной педагогической науки и практики образования в Казахстане // Вестн. Караганд. ун-та. Сер. Педагогика. — 2014. — № 4(76). — С. 148–153.
- 4 Жетписбаева Б.А., Шелестова Т.Ю., Абильдина С.К. Позиция учителей на внедрение английского языка в начальную школу // Казахстан: Междунар. электронный журн. начального образования. — 2016. — 8(4). — С. 659–674.
- 5 Учебная программа для начальной школы (1-4 классы) в рамках обновления содержания среднего образования. Английский язык. — Астана, 2016. — 82 с.

Б.А. Жетписбаева, Л.С. Сырымбетова, Т.Ю. Шелестова

Қазақстандағы бастауыш мектептегі білім берудің жаңа талаптарына сәйкес кіші жастағы балаларға ағылшын тілін үйрету

Қазіргі кезде қоғамның қажеттілігіне сай шетел тілдерін ерте жастан бастап оқыту білім жүйесінің құрама бөлшегі болып табылады. Үштілдік білім беру идеяларының шеңберінде Қазақстанда ағылшын тілін ерте кезден бастап үйрету маңыздылығы күннен күнге артады. Авторлар бастауыш мектептегі ағылшын тілін оқыту сапасын жақсартуға бағытталған, бастауыш шетел тілін үйретудегі өзгерістерді сараптады. Шетел тілін ерте жастан бастап оқытудың жағымды жақтарының көп болуына қарамастан, шешілмеген мәселелер әлі де жетерлік.

Кілт сөздер: шетел тіліне ерте жастан оқыту, ағылшын тілі, бастауыш мектеп, коммуникативтік құзыретті қалыптастыру, оқыту сапасын жақсарту.

Б.А. Жетписбаева, Л.С. Сырымбетова, Т.Ю. Шелестова

Обучение английскому языку детей младшего возраста в соответствии с новыми требованиями начального школьного образования в Казахстане

В настоящее время в соответствии с потребностями общества раннее обучение иностранным языкам постепенно входит составным компонентом в систему непрерывного образования. В контексте идей трехязычного образования важность раннего обучения английскому языку возрастает в Казахстане с каждым днем. Авторами проанализированы изменения, происходящие в начальном иноязычном образовании, которые направлены на улучшение качества преподавания английского языка в начальной школе. Отмечено, что несмотря на многие положительные процессы в области раннего обучения иностранным языкам, немало проблем все еще остаются нерешенными.

Ключевые слова: раннее обучение иностранному языку, английский язык, начальная школа, формирование коммуникативной компетенции, улучшение качества преподавания.

References

- 1 *Development of Strategic Directions for Education Reforms in Kazakhstan for 2015-2020*, Diagnostic report. Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education. Astana: Indigo print, 2014, 160 p.
- 2 The message of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the Leader of the nation N.A. Nazarbaev to the people of Kazakhstan «Strategy «Kazakhstan – 2050»: new political policy of the taken place state», December 14, 2012 // [ER]. Access mode: www.akorda.kz
- 3 Zhetpisbayeva B.A., Shelestova T.Yu. *Bulletin of Karaganda University, Pedagogics*, 2014, № 4(76), p. 148–153
- 4 Zhetpisbayeva B.A., Shelestova T. Yu., Abildina S.K. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 2016 June, 8(4), p. 659–674.
- 5 Educational program for primary school (Grades 1-4) within renew of content of secondary education, English, Astana, 2016, 82 p.