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**Ошибка! Недопустимый объект гиперссылки.**

## Pedagogical aspects of the formation of communication skills in French

This article discusses the problems and prospects of the development and teaching of French as a second foreign language in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The necessity of the improvement of multilingualism in Kazakhstan is a priority for the evolution of the state in modern conditions. Special attention is paid to the contribution of the French Embassy in Kazakhstan to the active development of French as a second foreign language. The article deals with the historical moments of the development of the French language, the prospects of learning French, the current state of the French language in Kazakhstan. We provide the results of a scientific and analytical survey on the use of pedagogical platforms for the formation of communication skills. This qualitative study revealed methods for the development of students' oral communication in French. During our research, we have identified the need to develop the formation of communication skills in French through pedagogical platforms. The results of this scientific work will be available to teachers of French as a foreign language.

*Keywords:* French, francophone, oral communication, pedagogical platforms, distance education, teaching methods, pedagogical aspect, national prospects.

### Introduction

French journalist Lise Barcellini shares her thought on Kazakhstan: “What do we know about Kazakhstan? Nothing, or almost. This country is as vast as five times the size of mainland France. But finally, how many can locate the country on a world map without hesitation?” [1].

Kazakhstan borders China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

According to official statistics from the 2019 census, the main ethnic groups are distributed as follows: Kazakhs (67.98 %), Russians (19.32 %), Uzbeks (3.21 %) as well as Ukrainians (1.47 %), Uighurs (1.4 %), Tatars (1.10 %), Germans (1.1 %), and other groups (4.5 %) [2].

This ethnic diversity is the consequence of the historical event known as “the Great Patriotic War” (the term used by the Soviet Union to designate the conflict with Nazi Germany from 1941 to 1945). This period was a key period for several ethnic groups: because of the dangers of this period, there were many deportations in Central Asia to ensure supplies at the borders (in provisions and military equipment), as well as to avoid betrayals and desertions. The Kazakh steppe hosted hundreds of people from different peoples and became their new home [3].

We distinguish the notions of “Kazakh” and “Kazakhstani” in several ways:

- According to the definitions given by Mrs. Barcellini, the term “Kazakh” comes from the Turkish “Kazakh”, which means free, independent. Formed in the 15th century, it is a family of ethnic and indigenous peoples of Kazakhstan. Today, most of the inhabitants of Kazakhstan are “Kazakhs”.

- According to the research of the journal Novastan, Kazakh — the “nationality” or ethnicity that has its origins in the Turkish peoples and medieval Mongolian tribes and which has its own traditions, language, history and cultural values.

- The term “Kazakhstani” means a citizen or native of Kazakhstan, which represents 18.5 million inhabitants of Kazakhstan, regardless of their ethnic origin [ibid.].

- Kazakh people-citizenship, an artificial form of consciousness that corresponds and functions according to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan [ibid.].

*Literature Review, discovery of languages spoken in Kazakhstan*

Language is not just a means of communication, but it is also the main feature of ethnic identity. This is the language of the ethnic group to which that person belongs. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic country where representatives of 130 ethnic groups live.

In 1989, the law on languages in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic was adopted. It defines the status of the Kazakh and Russian languages and declares that: “*Официальным языком Казахстана является казахский язык*” и что русский является “*языком межнационального общения*” (“*The official language of Kazakhstan is Kazakh*” and that Russian is “*the language of interethnic communication*”) [4]. Such a definition of the status of the Russian language to some extent contributed to interethnic tensions and was one of the main causes of the mass emigration of the Russian-speaking population of the country. Between 1990 and 1996, 2.283 million people left Kazakhstan, which led to the loss of tens of thousands of qualified specialists who worked in various fields of activity. This led to a change in state policy towards the Russian language. In 1995, a new constitution was adopted in Kazakhstan. Article 7 of this constitution redefines the legal status of languages. It states that the official language of the Republic of Kazakhstan is Kazakh, but the Russian language also receives the status of an official language. The latter has the opportunity, together with the Kazakh language, to be used in state organizations [1].

*Results, state of French education in Kazakhstan*

Today, in Kazakhstan, the situation of the French language is beginning to improve. Relations between France and Kazakhstan are developing, and many French international companies are establishing themselves in the territory, bringing a francophone workforce. Learning French is, therefore, a strong asset for students: knowledge of foreign languages can allow them to get jobs in international organizations and companies. In addition, these companies have their own platforms (educational, scientific information network, advertising, management, and others). The very learning of the language benefits from these tools, which are educational platforms.

An important point to highlight is that in 2018 the Sorbonne Institute, which is part of the Abai National Pedagogical University of Almaty, for the first time introduced the digital pedagogical platform Moodle to help in the acquisition of oral communication skills. About 55 Kazakh students in economics, for whom French is a foreign language, participated in this pilot project.

The goal of creating this educational platform was to develop students’ oral communication above all: in fact, oral skills are a strong indicator of a student’s knowledge of a foreign language — in our case, French.

This experiment on the use of educational platforms began in November 2018 and ended in March 2020: in 17 months, we were able to create our own Moodle-based academic platform, and we gave courses there focused on developing oral communication skills in FLE in Kazakhstan.

By tracking and analyzing students’ interactions with our platform, we could determine how often they used the platform.

Figure 1 shows that:

- 28.6 % of students always used our platform, without interrupting the experimentation, doing all the exercises introduced by the teachers.
- 25 % of students used our platform occasionally: according to our analysis they did not do all the exercises offered on the platform, they only did the exercises they liked.
- 28.6 % of students used our platform very rarely, due to technical problems, their reluctance to work remotely, or their lack of motivation.
- 8.9 % of students started using the platform late, that is, they did not immediately adapt to distance learning.
- The next 8.9 % did not use the platform at all and did not even enter the platform network.

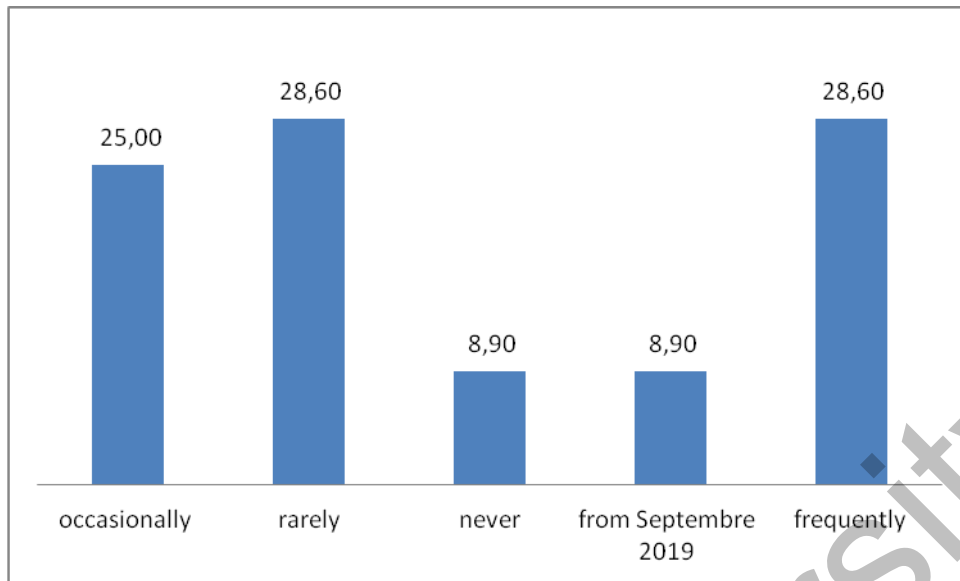


Figure 1. Distribution of students according to their use of the platform

After our experiment on using the educational platform to develop oral communication skills, the students were asked about this experiment. The results are presented in Figure 2.

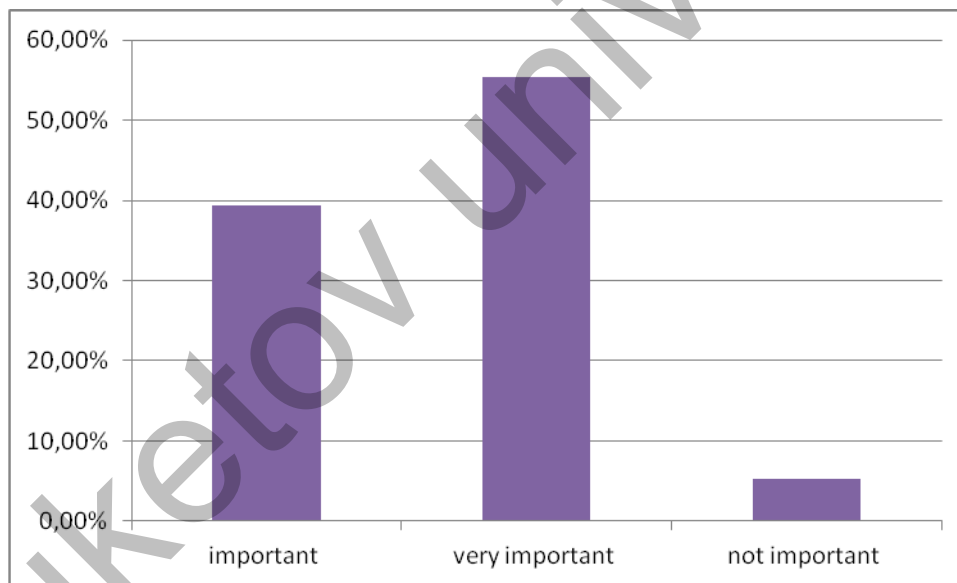


Figure 2. Return of students to the educational platform

88.7 % of students believe that educational platforms are effective for the development of oral skills in a foreign language. While the remaining (11.3 %) believe that the use of educational platforms is not effective for the development of oral communication.

Many environments have been created for learning the French language and for its further development. There are many French Alliances, and the French schools “Ecole française internationale Charles de Gaulle — Miras” were opened, the French sections in the NIS-Nazarbayev schools named after the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The state foundation “Nursultan Nazarbayev Education Fund” was created in 1998. From the very beginning of its work, the fund was devoted to its mission to promote the development of the education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan in accordance with international standards. Its objective is to apply national and international best practices, implement and disseminate international programs and standards in the field of education of the country. Under the auspices of the Education Fund, the Miras International School was

founded. The structure of the school includes 4 levels of education: kindergarten (3 years), elementary school (4 years), middle school (5 years), high school (3 years).

Miras International French School is licensed under the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs for all levels of study (The International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP), IB Middle Years Program (MYP), IB Diploma Program (DP)). The International Baccalaureate Diploma [IB Diploma] gives the opportunity to enter the best universities in the world without an entrance exam. The French school is accredited by the Ministry of National Education, and, at the end of the courses, students receive the “*Diplôme National du Brevet*” and the “*Diplôme de Baccalauréat*”.

The accelerated socio-economic development of Kazakhstan at the beginning of the twenty-first century caused an urgent demand for professionals with a high level of technical skills, management, and leadership. For this, in 2008 on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a project to create the “intellectual schools” NIS (Nazarbayev intellectual school) was launched.

“Intellectual schools” are designed to become an experimental platform for the development, monitoring, research, analysis, testing, and implementation of modern models of educational programs by levels: elementary school (including pre-school education and training), elementary and middle school, high school.

The educational requirements and standards in Kazakhstan do not allow to introduce an appropriate level of modern forms of management in the field of education, and to implement innovative educational programs and scientific projects.

A feature of the educational process of the NIS intellectual school is the possibility for students in grades 1–12 to choose the courses they will take, and the French language is offered as an alternative discipline. Since 2012, 10 classes study French as a second foreign language. The Kazakh education cycle offers 11 years of training. Usually, children start school at the age of six or seven. The first cycle of education, from the first to the sixth year, is for students up to 11 years, and secondary education continues up to 17 years.

Almost all students pass the unified national test, which is both the final exam of the end school and is an entrance exam in higher institutions. Several schools and universities also opened French sections. In 2013, the Sorbonne-Kazakhstan Institute was inaugurated. All these steps show that the French language is beginning to be well-developed [5].

In addition, the French and Kazakh governments have taken a major step forward with the creation of the Abaï-Verne project, the result of collaboration between the French Embassy and the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan. This project awards a hundred scholarships to master’s and doctoral students. Kazakhstani realize the usefulness of the French language for their future projects.

However, even if the situation of the French language is improving in Kazakhstan, the teaching of French is still incomplete as students experience difficulties with a linguistic, communicative nature, finding various information, preparing presentations, etc.

Language difficulties arise from the lack of a suitable French language method for Kazakh students. There are good methods of learning the French language, but they are too global, the national characteristics of students are not considered.

Communication difficulties arise from the fact that Kazakhstan is not a French-speaking country. Students are strongly lacking communicative interactions in a French environment, the communication environment provided by the teacher is not enough. There is a need to help and guide students [6].

#### Teaching methodology

During the first stages of French courses, learners take the general courses. The basic methods (Alter Ego 1+, Panorama, Season etc.), on which the great beginners in the FLE class work, allow to set up various authentic documents, which can be used owing to the electronic resources offered: sound documents, videos, texts, etc. However, these documents are limited in number and are not always available. Given this, in these cases of shortage of audio and video material, we invite students to register on the university educational platform, where the teacher transmits all the missing audio and video material.

All these actions in favor of the French language also require the training of executives, mainly French teachers, as well as the diversification of French training and disciplines. It is important to introduce civilization courses accompanying language courses. Many Kazakh universities of foreign languages have done this for the second foreign language and, in our case, for French. The French Civilization course corresponds to the level of French taught: FLE Civilization beginner (A1), FLE Civilization intermediate (A2), FLE Civilization autonomous (B1), FLE Civilization advanced (B2), FLE Civilization expert (C1). These courses distinguish two aspects: they are additional elements for the practical acquisition of the foreign lan-

guage, but they represent above all a discipline that must be studied by future and current teachers of this foreign language.

Indeed, the teaching of a foreign language consists not only in the acquisition by students of linguistic knowledge and skills in oral and written communication, but also in the acquisition of basic information about the country of the language being studied: national characteristics, nature, cultural values, economic structure, lifestyle habits, history, etc. Thus, the acquired skills will then be used in communication with representatives of other cultures, contributing primarily to an adequate perception of the interlocutor's speech and a correct understanding of the original texts.

It is not easy to determine the current teaching methodology for French (FLE) education in Kazakhstan. Relying on our experience as a student and teacher of our French chair at the Sorbonne-Kazakhstan Institute, we conclude that each teacher can teach according to his own methodology.

In 2019, Kazakhstan, in collaboration with the International French School Charles de Gaulle — Miras in Kazakhstan and the “*Alliance Française de Nursoultan*” (Formerly Astana; the capital in 2019 took the name of the first outgoing president: Nur-Sultan. The current president is Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.) created a new method of French “*Le Français en action! — 1*” for students and schoolchildren.

This method is based on the principles of the operational approach. It is aimed at adults and older adolescents and covers levels A1 and A2.1 of the CEFR in a course of about 140 hours [7].

It is a method of learning French that offers really enriching themes, multicolored, with an activity book, audio content, slideshows, teaching sheets and tests. Today, owing to the French Embassy in Kazakhstan, this method has been disseminated in its original version in many schools, universities and centers of Kazakhstan.

Despite the growing interest in the French language in educational institutions in Kazakhstan, there are still some problems in its teaching, in particular the lack of diverse and effective teaching materials and the methodological lack of choice of the model and content of the teaching. In most cases, the basis for teaching a foreign language (in our case, French) in university practice becomes the means of instruction (mainly textbooks, discs, interactive whiteboards, etc.), but unfortunately, new technologies are still too rarely used.

We, therefore, believe that we must encourage and advance in the use of educational platforms of new technologies, such as Moodle, MOOC, E-learning, Trello programs, distance learning or sites to learn French such as Babbel, Duolingo, TV 5 Monde, 7 days on the Planet, Bravolol, the *bonjourdefrance* website, etc.

#### *Discussion, prospects for learning French in Kazakhstan*

There are interesting prospects for learning French in Kazakhstan, and to popularize it in our country it is necessary to motivate students to study it. French is not only fascinating, beautiful and melodic, but it is also the richest language of diplomacy and culture, the possession of which opens to learners wide opportunities for learning, cultural enrichment, and communication.

The motivation of students to choose and study the French language comes from the fact that education is an important aspect of cooperation between Kazakhstan and France. Indeed, these two countries wish to strengthen the mutual scientific and cultural presence, develop the teaching of the French language in the schools and universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and increase the number of student exchanges.

One of the first steps in the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Embassy of France was the creation in 2008 of the Republican Association of French-language teachers based on the Almaty teachers' association.

The headquarters of the association is at the Alliance Française of Almaty. The meetings of the association will also be held at the Alliance Française Almaty.

The association organizes training seminars for its members, organizes festivals and competitions for schoolchildren and students, participates in international conferences and organizes Weeks of the French language, bringing together between 300 and 400 students from all school and university levels. Participants in the French Language Week can express their skills in declamation, visual art and singing, their knowledge of the Francophone countries present, write essays, present their own projects and participate in language competitions [8].

French-Kazakh cooperation in the field of higher education is based on three levels:

- European: French institutions participate in projects financed by Europe, such as Tempus or Erasmus.
- Bilateral: this is the direct cooperation of French and Kazakh educational institutions based on agreements, with the possible participation of French companies that can provide financial and material support. For example, Jean-Pierre Cuq participated in this cooperation project as president of the “As-

sociation de Didactique du Français Langue Etrangère” (ASDIFLE). In 2016, he described the state of French teaching in the world, based on research about the French language in education and university systems. He points out that: “The Miras International School of Kazakhstan brings together learners and teachers of 12 different nationalities, the courses being taught in Kazakh, Russian, English and French. French section consists of 3 classes with 20 learners, and it is financially supported by the community and French companies” [8].

– Institutional: through the work of the Embassy of France, in constant contact with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to identify potential cooperation opportunities.

Among the main educational programs and projects implemented in the framework of cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and France, we highlight the following points:

– In collaboration with the Abai National Pedagogical University of Kazakhstan, a large-scale project was set up to open the French Institute Sorbonne-Kazakhstan, as the only Central Asian subsidiary of the world-famous European educational cluster, Sorbonne.

– With the support of the oil company Total, opening of the Franco-Kazakh cultural center in the “Autonomous educational organization Nazarbayev University”. Now the center has taken the form of a cafe in the French style, an excellent place for students to socialize and relax.

– About 100 scholarships from 2017 to 2020, this is the proposal of the French Embassy in Kazakhstan — the new Abai-Verne international mobility program in France for young researchers engaged in research in various fields. This program is open to young Kazakh researchers who speak French or English [9].

As stated by the press service of the First President of Kazakhstan, the education is an absolute priority for the development of Kazakhstan. The goal is to propose to the students all the possibilities to learn in good conditions in their own country. The strategy put in place is going to be rewarded by the recognition of universities around the world [10].

In 2007, approving the national education development program for 2011–2020, President Nazarbayev pointed out that learning French is an opportunity for young Kazakhs, and French people are welcome to study and share the culture with them [11].

### *Conclusions*

To conclude, we note from the interview of the Minister of Education and Science of Kazakhstan A. Aymagambetov, dated October 14, 2019, the budget allocated for science will increase significantly (from 43 billion tenge this year to 63 billion tenge for the next year). The funds are partly dedicated to the purchase of materials. So, they need to determine the teaching needs to improve the quality of education and modernize it. This is an important question they need to prepare [12].

In this context, particular importance should be attached to the following points in higher vocational education:

- The development of distance learning, because it can allow everyone, throughout their professional life and with a view to continuous self-improvement, to take courses free of charge, improve their qualifications or acquire new ones, or change professions.

- The introduction of educational platforms in all Kazakh universities to study the French language, so that the teaching of French is not limited to face-to-face courses.

- The introduction of new methods in the teaching of the French language, specifically adapted to Kazakh students.

- The introduction of the disciplines “Culture and Civilization” of the studied foreign language and the organization of various cultural events.

- The organization of training for young specialists in the French language, to improve their skills.

In addition, the integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan into the world educational space will be facilitated by the place of the French language as a second foreign language. Multilingualism helps us to integrate into the world and build a new economy based on innovation and knowledge, this is an important element of our country’s foreign and domestic policy. If we speak many foreign languages, we will be able to reveal to the world our Eastern culture and traditions.

The study of the French language on a par with English has a significant impact on education and on the level of social, socio-economic, and technological development of Kazakhstan. It provides the future specialist with skills that will be indispensable to him during his integration into the sphere of professional activity.

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### **Француз тілінде студенттердің коммуникативтік дағдыларын қалыптастырудың педагогикалық аспектілері**

Мақалада Қазақстанда француз тілін екінші шет тілі ретінде дамыту мен оқытудың өзекті мәселелері мен келешегі қарастырылған. Авторлар мақалада қазіргі жағдайда мемлекет дамуының басым бағыты ретінде Қазақстанда көптілділікті дамыту қажеттілігін де атап өтеді. Францияның Қазақстандағы Елшілігінің француз тілін екінші шет тілі ретінде белсенді дамыту мысалында Қазақстандағы көптілділікті дамытуға қосқан үлесіне ерекше назар аударылған. Сондай-ақ, француз тілінің дамуының тарихи сәттері, француз тілін үйренудің келешегі мен Қазақстандағы француз тілінің өзектілігі туралы айтылған. Сонымен қатар коммуникативтік дағдыларды қалыптастыру үшін педагогикалық платформаларды пайдалану бойынша ғылыми-аналитикалық сауалнама нәтижелері сипатталған. Зерттеу жұмыстарын жүргізе отырып, авторлар педагогикалық платформалар арқылы француз тілінде коммуникативтік дағдыларды қалыптастыруды дамыту қажеттілігін анықтаған. Осы квалиативті зерттеу француз тілінде студенттердің ауызша қарым-қатынасын дамыту әдістерін анықтады. Мақаланың ғылыми нәтижелері француз тілінің оқытушыларына шет тілі ретінде қолжетімді болады.

*Кілт сөздер:* француз тілі, франкофон, ауызша коммуникативтік қатынас, педагогикалық платформалар, қашықтықтан білім беру, оқыту әдістері, педагогикалық аспект, ұлттық перспективалар.

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### **Формирование у студентов коммуникативных навыков на французском языке: педагогические аспекты**

В статье рассмотрены актуальные проблемы, перспективы развития и преподавания французского языка как второго иностранного в Казахстане. Авторами доказана необходимость развития полиязычия в Казахстане, как приоритетного направления развития государства в современных условиях. Особое внимание уделено вкладу Посольства Франции в Казахстане в развитие полиязычия в Республике Казахстан на примере активного развития французского языка как второго иностранного. Кроме того, авторами статьи предложены материалы по историческим моментам развития французского языка, перспективам изучения французского и по актуальному состоянию французского языка в Ка-

захстане. Также описаны результаты научно-аналитического опроса по использованию педагогических платформ для формирования коммуникативных навыков. На основе проведенных исследований, авторами выявлена необходимость развития формирования коммуникативных навыков на французском языке через педагогические платформы. Данное качественное исследование вычленило методы для развития устной коммуникации студентов на французском языке. Результаты данной научной работы будут доступны для преподавателей французского языка как иностранного.

*Ключевые слова:* французский язык, франкофон, устная коммуникация, педагогические платформы, дистанционное образование, методы преподавания, педагогический аспект, национальные перспективы.

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