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**State-supported language strategies in Azerbaijan:
promotion of Azerbaijani and multilingual initiatives. /
Поддерживаемые государством языковые стратегии в
Азербайджане: продвижение азербайджанского и
многоязычных инициатив**

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Аннотация: Богатством каждой независимой и суверенной страны является изобилие языка на его территории, в котором проживающие национальности свободно могут использовать свои языки. В Азербайджанской Республике помимо государственного языка, существует более 15 языков на котором говорят этнические меньшинства. Помимо языков этнических меньшинств, население страны пользуются другими иностранными языками, которые входят в группу мировых языков. Объектами исследования в этой статье выступают иностранные языки и их соотношение с государственным языком. Законодательные акты, принятые для регулирования

языкового вектора в стране, является предметом исследования. Автором подробно описываются и освещаются законодательные органы и государственные структуры, которые играют решающую роль в тенденции развития языковой политики в стране. В ходе изучения языковой политики не обойтись без рассмотрения следующих двух основных социолингвистических терминов: языковое регулирование и языковое планирование, которые носят характер государственного или социального воздействия на функционирование или развитие языков в государстве. Автор в исследовании статьи в основном пользовался теоретическим методом, также проводил общий анализ данных. В основу построения выводов взяты правовые методы, а также социолингвистические методы (статистические и экспертные оценки). Иностранные языки мирового значения пользуются большим спросом среди молодежи, все чаще изучая эти языки они углубляются в истоки этого языка, изучают историю этой страны и через эту призму наблюдается феномен аккультурации посредством языка. Автором подробно рассмотрен статус государственного языка как де-юре, так и де-факто, также подробно рассмотрено положение наиболее распространенных на территории республики иностранных языков. Языковые реформы, проводимые в Азербайджанской Республике, в основном служат для усиления роли азербайджанского языка как государственного и носят характер языкового пуризма. Несмотря на проводимые реформы в области усиления государственного языка, мы рассматриваем также сбалансированную языковую политику в отношении других языков, существующих на территории Азербайджанской Республики.

Ключевые слова:

азербайджанский язык, полилингвизм, иностранный язык, языковое регулирование, языковое планирование, языковая политика, языковое законодательство, языковая ситуация, языковой плюрализм, языковой пуризм

1. Introduction

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the newly established states that asserted their independence embarked on the pursuit of autonomous foreign and domestic policies across diverse realms. Within these nations, the designated official languages (representing the language of the populace upon which the nomenclature of administrative-territorial entities is founded, in accordance with the sociolinguistic terminology elucidated in the Dictionary of Sociolinguistic Terms (Dictionary of Sociolinguistic Terms 2006: 230)) attained the stature of state languages, a designation subject to legislative oversight. The legislative enactments promulgated by these sovereign entities primarily facilitated the establishment of propitious circumstances conducive to the advancement and operational efficacy of state languages. Targeted initiatives were implemented to broaden the societal roles of these languages, alongside the allocation of resources to realize such initiatives. An influential phenomenon expounded upon by V. M. Alpatov in his scholarly works necessitates emphasis: the legal entrenchment of linguistic predominance may, however, be absent, a circumstance with no bearing on its effective functionality (Alpatov 2014: 11).

The aforementioned transformations also affected the Republic of Azerbaijan, over the years trade, industrial, social and humanitarian relations with advanced countries have expanded, which contributed to the formation of foreign language institutes on the territory of Azerbaijan. The most socially communicative foreign languages in Azerbaijan, in various socially significant spheres, are Russian and English (Garibova 2019), Arabic, Persian and

Turkish are rarely used among the population, while it should be noted that Turkish is understood by most of the population. This is due to the fact that Azerbaijani and Turkish are from the same branch of the Turkic languages included in the qualification. Speaking about the status of languages in Azerbaijan, the author first considered the situation of foreign languages in Azerbaijan in primary schools and gave a general assessment of each language appearing in educational institutions, also the article investigated the state of minority languages (Moskvitcheva, Abdullaev 2021).

Language regulation and language planning play a crucial role in shaping and sustaining language policy, state-sponsored multilingualism, and cultural diversity across various countries. Azerbaijan stands as an example of a country where the state's support for the Azerbaijani language and multilingualism holds a central position.

In this article, we examine language regulation and planning in the Republic of Azerbaijan, assessing their roles in safeguarding and promoting the Azerbaijani language, as well as fostering multilingualism within the nation. We will delve into the official status accorded to the Azerbaijani language, evaluate the strategies implemented for its preservation and enhancement, and elucidate the state's role in endorsing other languages spoken in Azerbaijan.

By analyzing the language policy and practices of the Republic of Azerbaijan, we can attain a more profound understanding of the state's efficacy in supporting the Azerbaijani language and multilingualism within the nation, and discern their influence on both linguistic diversity and the cultural identity of its populace.

2. Methods and Literature Review

Linguistic diversity represents the wealth and cultural heritage of a nation, with its preservation and protection being responsibilities shared by both the state and society.

The significance of this research stems from observable trends in the Azerbaijan community: despite the established regulatory frameworks governing the state language and other native tongues, there's a growing inclination towards using foreign languages—namely English and Russian—in daily communication, either wholly or partially (Hamlet Isaxanlı 2017). This shift contributes to linguistic unease among segments of the population who either remain dedicated to their native language or lack proficiency in these foreign languages.

In examining and analyzing the objectives outlined in this article, the author effectively utilized both theoretical and comprehensive analytical methods, including a systems approach, analysis, analogy, synthesis, and modeling. The drawn conclusions are rooted in legal methodologies, complemented by sociolinguistic methods, such as statistical and expert evaluations.

An examination of policy documents related to the country's linguistic strategy revealed key approaches for bolstering support for both national and international languages, as well as for indigenous minority languages in Azerbaijan.

In the article under review, we will employ two principal sociolinguistic terms: 'language regulation' and 'language planning'.

In the Dictionary of Sociolinguistic Terms, 'language regulation' is presented alongside other terms such as 'structuring of linguistic reality' and 'language legislation' (Dictionary of Sociolinguistic Terms 2006: 271). The latter term is more pertinent to our study, as

language regulation might emanate from the state to society, mediated by laws pertaining to language (here, the interest arises from the state's external language policy and its application to society). Alternatively, it could stem from societal demands to the state for the establishment of new normative linguistic legislations that govern the languages spoken within that society.

Both 'language regulation' and 'language legislation' denote the state's or society's influence on the operation or evolution of languages within a country.

The appropriate framework for understanding linguistic regulation in a multilingual context can be ascertained by examining the linguistic landscape that has emerged in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

For the discussion of the roles and functionalities of both the state and foreign languages in the Republic of Azerbaijan, this article will reference the symbolic systems introduced by Roger T. Bell, selectively pertaining to this particular polyglossic context (Roger T. Bell 1980: 240-243):

Language type:

S – Standard

C – Classical

K – Creole

Language status:

SO – Sole official language

PL – Promoted language without official status but used in communication

TL – Tolerated language, neither encouraged nor prohibited by authorities

Percentage of speakers using the language as L1 (scale from 0-100%):

100%-90%

89%-70%

69%-40%

39%-20%

19%-3%

Less than 3%

Language functions:

WE – Language of wide external communication, used for diplomatic interactions with other countries

WI – Language of wide internal communication, serving as a lingua franca, regularly used by those whose native language is different

M1 – Language of instruction in primary schools

M2 – Language of instruction in secondary schools

M3 – Language of instruction in higher education institutions

M4 – Academic language, employed for publishing scientific articles and monographs

R – Language used in public religious services

Table 1. Sociolinguistic Characteristics of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Languages	Language Type	Language Status	Percentage of L1 Speakers (according to AzStat)	Language Functions
Azerbaijani	S	SO	1 (99.6%)	WE/WI (ethnic group) / M1 / M2 / M3 / M4 / R
Russian	S	PL	5 (7.5%)	WE/WI / M1 / M2 / M3 / M4 / R (ethnic group)
English	S	PL	6 (1.3%)	WE/WI / M1 / M2 / M3 / M4
Turkish	S	PL	-	WI / M4
Arabic	C	TL	-	M4 / R
Persian	C	TL	-	M4

In Table 1, the sociolinguistic characteristics of various languages in the Republic of Azerbaijan are presented. Azerbaijani, being the dominant language, has a staggering 99.6% of speakers who identify it as their L1 (first language). It is categorized as a standard (S) language and holds the sole official language (SO) status. The language functions of Azerbaijani encompass a wide range, including both external and internal broad communication, instruction at all educational levels, academic publications, and public religious services.

Russian, with 7.5% L1 speakers, and English, with 1.3% L1 speakers, are both considered standard languages but have a promoted status (PL). They share many of the same functional roles as Azerbaijani, although Russian has an additional role in the context of its ethnic group.

Turkish, another standard language with a promoted status, is primarily used for wide internal communication and academic purposes. Both Arabic and Persian are categorized as classical (C) languages with a tolerated status (TL) and are predominantly utilized for academic purposes, with Arabic also being used in religious contexts. At a certain historical juncture in the Republic of Azerbaijan, these languages held a prestigious status. They were used for composing poetry and were prevalent in specific communicative domains such as religion and science.

In the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani and Russian serve as the most functional languages across various sectors, including humanitarian, socio-economic, and industrial fields. While prayers (namaz) in mosques are conducted in Arabic, the khutba (sermon) is elucidated in Azerbaijani for the congregation. Orthodoxy represents the second largest religious denomination after Islam in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Statistically, the Orthodox Christian population numbers around 209.7 thousand, constituting 2.3% of the total. The

country is home to five Orthodox Christian churches, with three of them situated in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Wikipedia. Christianity in Azerbaijan 2022). Orthodox services are conducted in Russian.

Given the intricate polyglossic linguistic landscape in the Republic of Azerbaijan, there arises an imperative for meticulous language regulation. To avert potential linguistic crises and to direct the trajectory of the language policy, language planning becomes indispensable.

The sociolinguistic dictionary provides the following definition for language planning: "A type of human activity dedicated to addressing language challenges. The goals of language planning can encompass changing the functional relationships among languages or language subsystems in society and addressing issues of correctness—codifying specific linguistic realities" (Dictionary of Sociolinguistic Terms 2006: 270). From this description, it's evident that language planning, serving as a tool for language regulation, is oriented towards the future.

Tollefson characterizes language planning as the deliberate efforts by planners to shape the structure or functions of a language(s) (Tollefson 1991). Such intentional endeavors might involve language purification, language revival (as seen with Hebrew), language reform (like in Turkish), language standardization (as with Swahili), and language modernization (exemplified by Swedish) (Eastman 1983). Hence, language planning practices are perceived differently in monolingual and multilingual societies. Clearly, contingent on the particular circumstances of a country or speech community, language planning can manifest in diverse ways.

Language policy, as an integral component of overarching state policy, is implemented through language planning. There must be a synergy between these two entities to preclude potential linguistic crises in a nation. As M. Rannut astutely observes, "language policy is orchestrated by politicians, whereas planning is the domain of specialists" (Rannut 2004: 63).

3. Results

3.1. State structures regulating language legislation in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The fundamental legislative document of the Republic of Azerbaijan is its Constitution, which holds enduring legal authority within the nation's territory. This cornerstone of statehood is anchored in a three-tiered system of governance. This consists of the executive branch, headed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan; the legislative branch, represented by the Milli Majlis (National Assembly) of the Republic of Azerbaijan; and the judicial branch, which is the judicial system of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, titled "The Head of the Azerbaijani State," outlines the conceptual role of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan as both the head of state and leader of the executive branch.

The Milli Majlis, or National Assembly, serves as the legislative body of the state and is composed of 125 deputies. This entity bears the responsibility for the adaptation, rejection, and annulment of legislative acts and directives at a national level. Within the National Assembly, there are 15 active committees. Specifically, the Committee on Science and Education is tasked with shaping and executing the state's policy in its respective domain. Duties of this committee encompass proposing and evaluating initiatives and directives related to implementation and strategy in areas such as language, science, education, mass

media, and religion.

The executive branch of the Republic of Azerbaijan is embodied by the Cabinet of Ministers, which operates directly under the jurisdiction of the President. This entity supervises the actions of various ministries and aids in the execution of social and economic programs.

The State Language Commission serves as the primary authority concerning the use of the Azerbaijani language in public domains. It oversees its application in television and radio broadcasts, dubbed movies, translated literature, and is also responsible for monitoring and enhancing the linguistic proficiency of journalists. The commission commits to devising strategies that elevate the standards of Azerbaijani language usage in the media. Based on surveys conducted by journalists, commission members acknowledged existing issues related to the use of the Azerbaijani language in both media and the wider public realm (Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the approval of the new composition of the State Language Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2017).

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan personally chairs the State Language Commission. The deputy roles within the Commission are held by the First Vice-President, the Chief of Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the President of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, and the Chairman of the Azerbaijan Writers' Union. Additionally, the Commission encompasses 33 active members.

The primary authority in Azerbaijan overseeing educational matters is the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan). This ministry collaborates with the Ministry of Finance to sustain the funding of diverse educational initiatives, both nationally and internationally. The ministry enforces the decrees issued by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan (ANAS) is responsible for organizing and executing research dedicated to the preservation of Azerbaijan's culture and traditions. This scholarly institution undertakes an analytical evaluation of the performance of other educational entities, ministerial laboratories, and private institutions, offering recommendations for enhancement. The ANAS orchestrates and oversees pivotal scientific endeavors that focus on preserving the culture and traditions linked with the Azerbaijani language.

The academy acts as the central scientific nexus, amalgamating the nation's universities, educational institutions, and research centers. Its function entails offering recommendations, appraisals, guidance, and formulating proposals concerning the operations of various institutes within the country. Additionally, it presents suggestions to the government on shaping the standing of the Azerbaijani language, as well as issues in education and science (Charter of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, 2014).

In conclusion, it's vital to underline that the ANAS stands as one of the most prominent educational and scientific entities in the Republic of Azerbaijan, playing a pivotal role in the progression of the scientific domain and linguistic diversity, including the bolstering of the Azerbaijani language.

3.2. Legal Standards for Language Regulation in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The primary legislative documents governing language regulation in the Republic of Azerbaijan encompass the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Law "On the State Language of the Republic of Azerbaijan", several subsidiary regulatory acts, and

international commitments undertaken by Azerbaijan.

3.2.1. Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Article 21, titled "State Language", of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan designates the Azerbaijani language as the sole official language within the country. The state is responsible for promoting the development of its official language. Furthermore, the second provision stipulates that the state ensures the fostering and utilization of other languages spoken by the population within the boundaries of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1995).

Article 25, titled "Right to Equality", safeguards the rights and freedoms of all individuals irrespective of their race, ethnicity (previously referred to as "nationality" until 2016), religion, language, gender, origin, property and official status, convictions, and affiliations to political parties, trade unions, or other public organizations. It prohibits any curtailment of rights and freedoms based on the aforementioned criteria. In 2009, predicated on a nationwide referendum, an amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan was made, introducing the following clause: based on the aforementioned criteria, harm must not be inflicted upon individuals, nor can privileges or benefits be granted or denied to them.

Article 42 "The Right to Education" states that citizens are entitled to free compulsory general secondary education, with the State overseeing the education system. Furthermore, for talented students, the state guarantees continued education regardless of their financial status.

Article 45 "The Right to Use One's Native Language" lays the foundation for fostering a multilingual environment. This article asserts that individuals have the autonomy to pursue education and upbringing in any language of their preference, ensuring that the use of one's native language is never restricted in communication.

Article 45. The Right to Use the Native Language:

I. Everyone reserves the right to utilize their native language. All have the prerogative to receive upbringing and education and to create in any language they desire.

II. No individual can be denied the right to use their native language.

3.2.2. On the State Language of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Law concerning the State Language of the Republic of Azerbaijan was enacted on September 30, 2002, and is registered under the designation No. 365 –IIQ. It comprises three sections and a total of 20 articles [Azərbaycan Respublikasında dövlət dili haqqında 2002].

Article 1. Legal Status of the State Language: This section emphasizes that the Azerbaijani language stands as the official language of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Moreover, it mandates every citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan to be proficient in the state language.

Article 5. The Application of the State Language in Education: This article underscores the significance of mastering the state language. It further stipulates that all prospective university entrants in the Republic of Azerbaijan are required to pass an examination in the state language.

5.1. In the Republic of Azerbaijan, educational processes are conducted in the state

language.

5.2. Educational institutions operating in languages other than the state language in the Republic of Azerbaijan must adhere to regulations stipulated by law. In such institutions, instruction in the state language is compulsory.

5.3. Candidates seeking admission to higher and secondary vocational educational institutions in the Republic of Azerbaijan must clear an examination in the Azerbaijani language.

Article 7. Application of the State Language in Service, Advertising, and Announcements.

Per Article 7, the state language is employed across all sectors of service, advertising, and announcements within the Republic of Azerbaijan's territory. It is further highlighted that in contexts associated with serving foreigners, other languages may be used alongside the state language. When deemed necessary, in advertising (the term "advertising" is currently struck out) and in announcements (such as on boards, displays, posters, etc.), languages other than the state language can be employed. In these instances, the space taken by a foreign language should not exceed that of the state language and should always follow the text in the state language.

Article 14. Alphabet of the State Language

This article specifies that the alphabet of the Republic of Azerbaijan's state language is the Azerbaijani alphabet, which utilizes Latin script.

3.2.3. The Education Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Education Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan was enacted on June 19, 2009, and comprises 47 articles. Notably, another statute, the General Education Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was adopted on March 29, 2019, which consists of 33 articles. Within these two legislations, we will only examine the article titled "Language of Instruction" (Article 7 in the Education Law and Article 6 in the General Education Law), which holds significance for our research (Təhsil haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikasının qanunu 2009, Ümumi təhsil haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikasının qanunu 2019).

Both laws specify in their initial sections that in both higher and general educational institutions, the primary language of instruction is the state language, Azerbaijani. However, instruction in these establishments can also be provided in other languages, considering the preferences of the citizens and the institution's founders, and in alignment with international treaties endorsed by the Republic of Azerbaijan or agreements with bodies or institutions as defined by the appropriate executive authority. Additionally, such institutions must adhere to the national educational standards or educational programs that have received international accreditation. For general education institutions that offer lessons in a foreign language, the teaching of Azerbaijani language, literature, history, and geography is mandatory. For students with limited proficiency in Azerbaijani, preparatory classes and courses are organized, following the guidelines set by the designated institution or body under the relevant executive authority.

Another salient point in the General Education Law within the "Language of Instruction" article stipulates that in state educational establishments, students aiming to pursue their studies in another language, in line with national educational standards, are required to undergo an interview in their desired language of instruction. This process is determined and overseen by an institution or body as recognized by the appropriate executive authority

(Ümumi təhsil haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikasının qanunu 2019).

3.2.4. Decree on Measures to protect the Purity of the Azerbaijani Language and Enhance the Use of the State Language.

By Decree No. 323 dated November 1, 2018, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan established a state-funded legal entity of public law named "Monitoring Center under the State Language Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan." This entity oversees the application of the state language of the Republic of Azerbaijan and ensures the preservation of literary language norms within the media, Internet resources, and advertising mediums (Azərbaycan dilinin saflığının qorunması və dövlət dilindən istifadənin daha da təkmilləşdirilməsi ilə bağlı tədbirlər haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin fərmanı 2018).

3.2.5. Orders and state programs of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the advancement of the state language.

The directive issued on January 12, 2004, under the reference number 56, concerning the publication of materials in Azerbaijani using Latin script, paved the way for the wide-scale republication of valuable Azerbaijani works in literature, culture, and science that were previously printed in Cyrillic. This order highlighted significant decrees from June 18, 2001, "On the Enhancement of the Use of the State Azerbaijani Language", and August 9, 2001, "On the Commemoration of the Azerbaijani Alphabet and Language Day", both of which solidified the transition to using the Azerbaijani alphabet in Latin script. (Reference: Azərbaycan dilində latın qrafikası ilə kütləvi nəşrlərin həyata keçirilməsi haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin sərəncamı, 2004).

An order from September 2008 focused on financing the translation and publication of masterpieces from prominent global authors into Azerbaijani. This was in line with the directive No. 2613 from December 30, 2007, "On the Approval of the List of Works by Eminent Global Authors Scheduled for Publication in Azerbaijani". For this initiative, a fund of 5 (five) million manats (equivalent to 276 million rubles) was allocated from the Presidential Reserve Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan. (Reference: Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Financing the Publication of Masterpieces from Eminent Global Authors in Azerbaijani, 2008: 53).

The State Program, implemented on April 9, 2013, under the directive No. 2837, aims at promoting the use of the Azerbaijani language in the backdrop of globalization, while aligning with contemporary needs and furthering the study of linguistics within the country.

The primary objective of the State Program is to enhance state attention and commitment to the usage and application of the Azerbaijani language. It seeks to promote the Azerbaijani language within the context of globalization, aligning with contemporary demands, fundamentally improve linguistic research in the nation, consolidate creative initiatives focused on the growth of foundational and applied linguistic research, and integrate linguistic studies with pressing issues in modern society.

A principal task of the State Program is to examine the linguistic scenarios and relationships in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the program aims to refine the legislative foundation that supports the language's growth while safeguarding the standards of the literary language (The State Program on the Utilization of the Azerbaijani Language in the Framework of Globalization in Line with Current Demands and Advancement of Linguistics in the Country, 2013).

The directive titled "On Measures to Amplify the Use of the Azerbaijani Language in Digital Spaces," dated July 17, 2018, and registered under number 346, underscores the need to expand the presence of the Azerbaijani language in digital platforms. This ensures its accessibility to those keen on learning the language and aims to simplify its study. Following this directive, there was a proposal to initiate the "Digital Platform for the Azerbaijani Language for Non-Natives" project. [Reference: Azərbaycan dilinin elektron məkanda daha geniş istifadəsinin təmin edilməsi ilə bağlı bir sıra tədbirlər haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin sərəncamı, 2018].

3.2.6. Participation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in International Conventions.

A primary indicator of the preservation and advancement of tolerance and multiculturalism in any country is its stance towards minority populations, ethnic groups, and the linguistic and religious diversity within its borders.

Azerbaijan acceded to the Declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 18, 1992, titled "On the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities". Furthermore, on June 16, 2000, it became a signatory to the Council of Europe's Framework Convention "On the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities" dated February 1, 1995. Additionally, Azerbaijan endorsed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Reference: Azərbaycan Respublikasının qoşulduğu Beynəlxalq Konvensiyalar: 14).

Almost all national minorities residing within the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan are conversant in the Azerbaijani state language. Approximately four out of every five also speak Russian. While there are varying degrees of proficiency in these languages, the level is generally adequate for interethnic interactions (Reference: Azərbaycanda milli və dini azlıqlara bərabər hüquqlu vətəndaş kimi yaşayılır. Hökumət "Regional dillərin və ya azsaylı xalqların dillərinin Avropa Xartiyası"nın prinsiplərini daim diqqət mərkəzində saxlayır 2018: 10).

3.3. Language Planning of the Republic of Azerbaijan Based on Foreign Languages

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in light of a comprehensive assessment of its linguistic landscape and considering legal and regulatory perspectives in the realm of language policy, prioritizes the development of the state language. Besides the Azerbaijani language, the government also promotes the development of other languages spoken by ethnic communities within its territory, as well as foreign languages deemed important for broader outreach.

While official documents of the Republic of Azerbaijan do not specify the status of foreign languages, administrative documents from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan indicate that the following languages are considered foreign in general education institutions: English, German, French, Russian, Arabic, and Persian (Tədris planlarına dair qeydlər 2022). Notably absent from this list is the Turkish language. However, there are Turkish lyceums operating within the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the author emphasizes the importance of examining the presence and influence of the Turkish language in the country.

In this sub-chapter, the author aims to outline the current state of language development and the support that the Republic of Azerbaijan provides to these languages.

3.3.1. Russian: A Prestigious Language in the Republic of Azerbaijan

Russian is the second most spoken language in Azerbaijan after Azerbaijani, with 7.6% of

the total population using it (Azərbaycan Respublikasının Dövlət Statistika Komitəsi 2009).

Over 150,000 individuals in Azerbaijan consider Russian as their first language. This group primarily consists of ethnic Russians but also includes Russified Azerbaijanis, Ukrainians, Jews, and other minorities. As of 1994, 38% of Azerbaijanis were fluent in Russian as a second language (Suny, Ronald, and others 1996). The term "Russified Azerbaijani" refers to an individual with at least one Russian parent or a Russian-speaking Azerbaijani who predominantly speaks in Russian, possessing limited proficiency in Azerbaijani.

Out of 4,472 secondary schools in Azerbaijan, 15 schools exclusively use Russian as the medium of instruction. Additionally, 314 schools have both Azerbaijani and Russian sectors, cumulatively accounting for 7.6% of all schools. In total, 90,000 students receive their education in Russian within these institutions (Abdullayev, Hasanov 2021). Notably, the Azerbaijani state budget sponsors education in the Russian language.

A study by the Caucasus Research Resource Center revealed that among the South Caucasus republics (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia), Azerbaijan leads in the number of students studying in Russian (Caucasus Research Resource Centers. Knowledge of Russian in Azerbaijan 2014).

Table 2. Number of Students Studying in Russian in the South Caucasus Republics (in thousands)

Countries	2000/2001	2010/2011
Azerbaijan	107.5	94.7
Armenia	9.2	1.5
Georgia	38.1	8.5

The table 2. presents data on the number of students receiving education in the Russian language within the South Caucasus republics over two academic years: 2000/2001 and 2010/2011. From the data, it's evident that all three countries saw a decline in the number of students studying in Russian over the decade. Azerbaijan had the highest number of students in both years, even though there was a decline from 107.5 thousand to 94.7 thousand. Armenia witnessed a significant drop from 9.2 thousand to just 1.5 thousand, and Georgia's numbers decreased from 38.1 thousand to 8.5 thousand over the same period.

Russian, similar to English, is highly sought after in employment scenarios. Proficiency in these languages is always esteemed by employers. A majority of parents aspire for their children to be educated in the Russian language, attributing this desire to the prospects it offers their children in terms of employment opportunities or pursuing higher education in Russia post-schooling, which in turn broadens their perspectives. This aspiration among parents results in a scarcity of vacancies in Russian schools, subsequently leading to an issue of an insufficient number of qualified educators in the Russian-speaking domain (Iskanderova 2023).

Nearly every university in the Republic of Azerbaijan designates spots for education in Russian, aimed at training adept professionals. Leading this trend is the Baku State University with 795 places, followed by the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, offering 525 places (Iskanderova 2023).

It's also pertinent to highlight other universities and branches of Russian higher education

institutions located in Azerbaijan. One notable institution is the Baku Slavic University, which was established on the foundation of the erstwhile Azerbaijani Pedagogical Institute of Russian Language and Literature named after M. F. Akhundov. There are also branches of the Lomonosov Moscow State University and the I.M. Sechenov Moscow State Medical University.

In Azerbaijan, it's not uncommon to hear conversations in Russian, especially in public places. This phenomenon is most pronounced in Baku, largely attributed to the significant influx of tourists from the Russian Federation. These tourists often encounter local employees who can communicate seamlessly in Russian to cater to various services.

Proficiency in the Russian language among the population varies, but compared to other foreign languages, Russian holds a distinct position. For instance, a recent study conducted by the Caucasian Research Resource Center, aimed at determining the proficiency and number of foreign language speakers in the Republic of Azerbaijan, revealed that 7% of the population have an advanced proficiency in Russian, while 37% possess a basic proficiency. In contrast, the proficiency rates for English are notably lower, with only 1% having an advanced understanding of the language. The vast majority, 74%, possess merely fundamental knowledge of English. Proficiency in other languages is also low, with 88% having only fundamental knowledge. These findings provide valuable insights into the linguistic landscape of Azerbaijan, emphasizing the prominence of Russian and the potential room for growth in English language acquisition. Refer to Table 3. for details:

Table 3. Language Proficiency in Azerbaijan (%) in 2013 (Source: Caucasus Research Resource Centers. Knowledge of Russian in Azerbaijan 2014)

Language	Advanced Level	Intermediate Level	Basic Level	Fundamental Knowledge	No Knowledge
Russian	7	28	37	27	1
English	1	7	16	74	1
Other Language	2	4	5	88	2

In line with the Russian Federation's commitment to preserving and promoting the Russian language in the Republic of Azerbaijan, there has been an establishment and sponsorship of the "Russian House" in Baku (previously named the "Russian Information and Cultural Center"). This institution has a close collaboration with the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Azerbaijan. The primary mission of the Russian House in Baku involves conducting various humanitarian and cultural projects that aim to enhance cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia (Kazimova 2022).

According to Margarita Rusetskaya, a member of the Council on the Russian Language under the President of the Russian Federation, the Russian language is highly sought after in the Republic of Azerbaijan. In light of this high demand, Rusetskaya envisions the solution in the form of state initiatives to open more Russian schools and introduce new teaching positions. The substantial number of scientific publications in Russian within Azerbaijan underscores the fact that Russian maintains its status as a primary language for academic discourse. As Margarita Rusetskaya expressed, "In Azerbaijan, the Russian language feels most at home in the realm of scientific communication" (2022).

3.3.2. English as an Important Language

After the Republic of Azerbaijan declared its independence, its leadership began to forge close ties with European and American institutions. Azerbaijan has become a magnet for international investments, and numerous long-term contracts, predominantly in the oil industry, have been signed with Western nations.

The international contracts and institutions present in Azerbaijan have played an integral role in its development trajectory, complemented by the growing prestige of the English language within society. Over the past 15 years, English schools have sprouted up across the country, a testament to the burgeoning interest and rapidly increasing demand for English proficiency. This has led to a surge in the establishment of private educational courses and institutions catering to those eager to learn the language.

For many in Azerbaijan, the motivation to learn English lies in the prospects of securing a job with a lucrative salary, often provided by foreign companies, or the opportunity to pursue higher education in primarily Western countries.

However, the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan does not foresee the establishment of English-medium public schools in the near future, citing a lack of English-speaking children (Nazimqızı 2022).

Table 4. Number of students in educational institutions in the Republic of Azerbaijan by language department (Nazimqızı 2022).

Language Sector	Number of Students in 2022
Azerbaijani	1,428,608
Russian	131,412
English	5,457
Georgian	1,114
Turkish	295
French	130

Table 4 presents data on the distribution of students across different language departments within educational institutions in the Republic of Azerbaijan for the year 2022. As detailed in the table, the Azerbaijani language department has the highest enrollment, with 1,428,608 students, while departments for languages like English, Georgian, Turkish, and French have comparatively fewer students. Notably, the Russian language department also exhibits a significant number of students, at 131,412. This table provides insight into the linguistic landscape of education in Azerbaijan, highlighting the dominance of the Azerbaijani language and the relative importance of other languages in the educational setting.

There are several private schools in Baku offering instruction in English, including: Baku Oxford School, British School in Baku, the "XXI Century" Center for International Education and Innovation, The International School of Azerbaijan (TISA), Azerbaijan British College (ABC), and LANDAU School. These schools are among the most expensive in the Republic of Azerbaijan, making them unaffordable for the majority of citizens (Ramizgizy 2019).

For higher education in English within the Republic of Azerbaijan, institutions such as ADA University (Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy), Azerbaijan University of Languages, Odlar Yurdu University, and Khazar University are available.

In collaboration with the Embassy of the United States of America in Azerbaijan, the Baku

American Center operates in partnership with the Azerbaijan University of Languages. The center provides a wide range of programs and services for English language learning, information on studying in the U.S., and lectures on U.S. culture and history. For students learning English and interested in opportunities to study in the U.S., the center houses an American library, abundant with resources, books, and periodicals on American society and culture. In addition to internet access, the center also offers complimentary access to reference and analytical databases like EBSCO, E-Library USA, and J-STOR (Reference: The Baku American Center started operating after renovation, 2014).

3.3.3. Turkish

The Turkish language holds a distinct position in Azerbaijan, largely due to the cultural, historical, and political bonds between the two nations. Azerbaijan and Turkey have robust diplomatic and economic relationships. These ties also foster cultural and linguistic exchanges between the countries. Owing to business collaborations and shared initiatives, numerous Azerbaijanis engage with Turkish companies and agencies, which in turn, encourages the learning of the Turkish language.

The significance of the Turkish language in Azerbaijan can be characterized by the following aspects:

Linguistic Affinity: Azerbaijani and Turkish are both part of the Turkic language family, rendering them mutually comprehensible up to a certain point. Nevertheless, variations in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation persist.

Education: Several Turkish educational institutions operate within Azerbaijan. For instance, Turkish lyceums provide top-tier education, with numerous graduates proceeding to pursue higher education in Turkey. Examples of these lyceums are the Baku Turkish Lyceum "Turkiye Diyanet Vakfı" and the "Anadolu" Turkish Lyceum. The Qafqaz University in Baku stood out as a prominent university established with Turkish backing. It was the pinnacle of the educational consortium belonging to the Çağ Holding (Çağ Öyrətim İşlətmələri), instrumental in bolstering scientific and cultural relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. It was, however, shut down in 2017.

Educational Programs: Reciprocal scholarships and programs, encompassing student exchanges, further augment the linguistic bonds. Azerbaijani students who study in Turkey not only attain proficiency in the Turkish language but also act as cultural bridges between the two countries.

Language Proficiency: While Azerbaijanis and Turks can comprehend each other to some degree without formally learning each other's languages, Turkish is neither native nor prevalent in daily life in Azerbaijan. However, numerous Azerbaijanis opt to learn Turkish, particularly those aspiring to study or work in Turkey.

Cultural and Media Relations: Turkish television shows, series, movies, and music enjoy significant popularity in Azerbaijan, thereby aiding the proliferation of the Turkish language. These media sources not only serve as entertainment but also as valuable linguistic tools, especially among the youth.

Tourism: Turkey is a favored destination for Azerbaijani tourists. This popularity fosters an increased interest in the Turkish language, especially among frequent travelers or those with familial connections in Turkey.

Turkish Cultural Centers: Azerbaijan houses several cultural centers endorsed by Turkey.

These centers orchestrate a myriad of events, offer Turkish language courses, and curate cultural programs. Their presence is instrumental in the promotion of Turkish language and culture in Azerbaijan. In this context, the Yunus Emre Institute in Baku stands out significantly. The core missions of this institute encompass the promotion of the Turkish language, history, culture, and arts. It also facilitates access to information and documents in this domain and extends services to those wishing to immerse themselves in Turkish language, arts, and culture studies. Furthermore, the institute endeavors to enhance Turkey's cultural exchange with other nations.

In conclusion, we can note the following, even though Turkish isn't an official or commonly spoken language in Azerbaijan, its significance and sway in the nation have been escalating, attributable to the profound cultural, economic, and diplomatic connections between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

3.3.4. The French and German Languages in the Republic of Azerbaijan

Both French and German, being among the most widely spoken languages in Europe, hold a unique position in Azerbaijan's linguistic landscape. The prominence of these languages can be attributed to the cultural, economic, and political interactions between Azerbaijan and Western European nations.

The German culture and population significantly influenced Azerbaijan, particularly during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This has resulted in a sustained interest in learning German, which continues today.

Presently, the country boasts schools and courses that offer instruction in both German and French. Additionally, there are centers dedicated to cultural exchange.

The Deputy Minister of Education, Firudin Gurbanov, states that 59,947 students are studying French as a foreign language across 345 secondary educational institutions in Azerbaijan. French is also part of the curriculum in specialized departments of seven higher educational institutions. The Hugo Center for French Language and Culture, situated within the Baku Slavic University, and the French Information Center at the Azerbaijan University of Languages both play pivotal roles in promoting the in-depth study of French language and literature in the country. From 2015 to 2018, as part of the Sabah program, French was taught by experts with support from the French Embassy. The Baku French Lyceum, established in 2011 through a joint initiative by the Presidents of France and Azerbaijan, currently educates 150 students and has been operating successfully. Moreover, the Azerbaijani-French University has an enrollment of over 400 students ("Azərbaycan məktəblərində fransız dili yüksək səviyyədə tədris edilir" - Orelia Buzez 2019).

The German language enjoys particular demand among medical professionals, especially doctors, in the Republic of Azerbaijan. A considerable number of citizens aspire to migrate to Germany, underlining the strong interest in the nation. It's noteworthy that German serves as the official language in several European countries, allowing those proficient in the language to freely reside and work across multiple nations.

In educational institutions where English is the primary foreign language, Russian often serves as the secondary choice. Notably, there are institutions in the country where both German and French can act as the primary or supplemental foreign languages. However, such educational institutions are represented in a limited number (К каким иностранным языкам проявляют интерес азербайджанские школьники? 2018).

3.3.5. Arabic and Persian Languages in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, owing to its unique geographical position, has historically served as a bridge between the East and the West. This strategic location facilitated intense cultural and linguistic exchanges, particularly with neighboring regions of the Middle East and Central Asia. Within this framework, both the Arabic and Persian languages have secured a distinctive position in Azerbaijan's cultural and historical landscape.

The Arabic language has profoundly influenced the linguistic and cultural history of Azerbaijan, most notably during the Arab dominion in the early Middle Ages. Azerbaijani literature, science, and art extensively employed the Arabic script. In Azerbaijan's contemporary education system, Arabic is offered in religious institutions and specialized university departments. The Rector of the Azerbaijan Institute of Theology emphasized the institution's commitment to Arabic instruction, facilitating in-depth studies in theological sciences and fostering research in this domain (Safarova 2019).

The Persian language boasts deep historical ties to Azerbaijan. Throughout the epochs of various Persian dynasties, Persian language and culture profoundly shaped Azerbaijani traditions. Numerous classical Azerbaijani literary works are composed in Persian. In the Republic of Azerbaijan, Persian is imparted as a foreign language in tertiary institutions and select secondary schools. It also plays a role in cultural and academic interactions. As per the Ministry of Science and Education, two schools in Azerbaijan offer Persian as a foreign language curriculum. Nonetheless, the republic lacks any wholly Persian-medium secondary institutions (Azərbaycandakı iki məktəbdə fars dili tədris olunur 2023).

4. Conclusion

Language regulation and planning are pivotal to the language policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Advocating for and fostering the Azerbaijani language as the official state language is crucial not just for safeguarding national identity and cultural heritage but also for the nation's integration into the global community.

The government undertakes initiatives to fortify the status of the Azerbaijani language across all facets of public life, ensuring its utilization in formal contexts, educational establishments, the media, and beyond. Concurrently, Azerbaijani leadership recognizes the significance of promoting multilingualism. Indeed, multilingualism serves as a conduit for broadening international dialogue, facilitating cultural and scientific exchanges, and anchoring peace and stability in the region.

Nonetheless, endorsing multilingualism doesn't diminish the prominence of the Azerbaijani language. Rather, it underscores Azerbaijan's strategic insight into the imperative of honing the linguistic aptitude of its populace, enriching them with the requisite knowledge and prowess for active engagement in an increasingly globalized world.

To encapsulate, language regulation and planning endeavors in Azerbaijan have illuminated that striking a balance between conserving the national language and integrating foreign languages is feasible. This reaffirms the significance of language policy as an instrument that underpins social advancement, integration, and cross-cultural comprehension.

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Результаты процедуры рецензирования статьи

В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.

Со списком рецензентов издательства можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).

Представленная на рассмотрение статья «Поддерживаемые государством языковые стратегии в Азербайджане: продвижение азербайджанского и многоязычных инициатив», предлагаемая к публикации в журнале «Litera», представлена на английском языке, несомненно, является актуальной, ввиду возрастающего интереса к изучению истории развития национальных языков стран, получивших независимость после распада Советского Союза. С учетом того, что национальные языки стали государственными, были созданы благоприятные условия, способствующих развитию и эффективности функционирования государственных языков в сферах официально-деловой коммуникации.

В рецензируемой статье автор рассматривает языковое регулирование в Азербайджане,

оценивает его роль в сохранении и продвижении азербайджанского языка, а также в укреплении многоязычия внутри страны. Автор оценивает стратегии, реализуемые для сохранения и приумножения национального языка, и изучает роль государства в поддержке других языков, на которых говорят в Азербайджане.

Отметим наличие сравнительно небольшого количества исследований по данной тематике в отечественном языкознании. Статья является новаторской, одной из первых в российской лингвистике, посвященной исследованию подобной проблематики. В статье представлена методология исследования, выбор которой вполне адекватен целям и задачам работы. Автор обращается, в том числе, к различным методам для подтверждения выдвинутой гипотезы. Автор прибегал к комплексным и аналитическим методам, включая системный подход, анализ, аналогию, синтез и моделирование, а также социолингвистические методы и статистические.

Практическим материалом работы послужили тексты юридического характера. К сожалению, в работе автор не указывает объем практического материала отобранного для проведения исследования. Данная работа выполнена профессионально, с соблюдением основных канонов научного исследования. Исследование выполнено в русле современных научных подходов, работа состоит из введения, содержащего постановку проблемы, основной части, традиционно начинающуюся с обзора теоретических источников и научных направлений, исследовательскую и заключительную, в которой представлены выводы, полученные автором. Отметим, что заключение требует усиления, оно не отражает в полной мере задачи, поставленные автором и не содержит перспективы дальнейшего исследования в русле заявленной проблематики. Библиография статьи насчитывает 25 источников, среди которых представлены работы как отечественных, так и зарубежных исследователей.

К сожалению, в статье отсутствуют ссылки на фундаментальные работы отечественных исследователей, такие как монографии, кандидатские и докторские диссертации. Высказанные замечания не являются существенными и не умаляют общее положительное впечатление от рецензируемой работы. Опечатки, орфографические и синтаксические ошибки, неточности в тексте работы не обнаружены. В общем и целом, следует отметить, что статья написана простым, понятным для читателя языком. Работа является новаторской, представляющей авторское видение решения рассматриваемого вопроса и может иметь логическое продолжение в дальнейших исследованиях. Практическая значимость исследования заключается в возможности использования его результатов в процессе преподавания вузовских курсов по теории языка, а также курсов по междисциплинарным исследованиям, посвященным связи языка и общества. Статья, несомненно, будет полезна широкому кругу лиц, филологам, магистрантам и аспирантам профильных вузов. Статья «Поддерживаемые государством языковые стратегии в Азербайджане: продвижение азербайджанского и многоязычных инициатив» может быть рекомендована к публикации в научном журнале.