



Students' Perceptions of Translated Textbooks in Higher Education: A Case Study from the "100 New Kazakh Textbooks" Initiative

A. AITBAYEVA, A. KURANBEK, N. MUMINOV

ABSTRACT

Introduction. This article explores students' perceptions of textbooks translated under Kazakhstan's state initiative "New Humanitarian Knowledge: 100 New Kazakh Textbooks," launched to modernize higher education and enhance access to global academic knowledge in the Kazakh language. The topic is especially relevant in the context of growing efforts by non-English-speaking countries to localize educational content and promote linguistic equity in academia. Despite the large-scale implementation of translation-based reforms, there remains a lack of empirical research on how students actually experience and assess such translated resources.

Study participants and methods. A structured survey was conducted among 147 philosophy students from two leading universities in Kazakhstan, using four key indicators: translation quality, accessibility, integration of digital formats, and contribution to academic learning.

The results. While a majority of students (59.9%) reported positive attitudes toward the translated textbooks, highlighting improved comprehension and cultural relevance, the study also identified several challenges: 38.1% of respondents noted terminological inconsistencies, 42.8% pointed to insufficient contextual adaptation, and 35.4% indicated limited availability of digital versions. Notably, this research addresses a significant gap in the literature by empirically evaluating a large-scale, government-driven translation initiative in a non-Anglophone, post-Soviet context – a dimension rarely explored in either translation studies or educational development literature.

Conclusions. Unlike many studies that treat translated materials as supplementary educational tools, this paper positions them as instruments of language policy, localization of knowledge, and academic equity. Focusing on philosophy textbooks – where linguistic precision is essential – the study illustrates how translation functions not merely as a linguistic act but as a channel for epistemological access and curricular transformation. These findings have direct implications for education policymakers, curriculum developers, and translators engaged in similar reforms globally. The study offers a foundation for future interdisciplinary research on the intersection of translation, education reform, and national identity construction in multilingual societies.

KEYWORDS

academic translation, higher education, Kazakhstan, translated textbooks, philosophy education, linguistic accessibility

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, international organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe have emphasized the importance of equitable access to quality education, inclusive curricula, and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. Adopted in 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) calls on countries to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” [1]. UNESCO, for its part, plays a pivotal role in coordinating global efforts to achieve this objective. The organization is a vocal advocate for the establishment of inclusive education systems that ensure no learner is left behind [2]. The Council of Europe reinforces this agenda by underscoring the pivotal role of education in fostering democratic citizenship, human rights, and intercultural understanding [3].

These global priorities establish a normative framework for educational reforms in non-English-speaking countries, including Kazakhstan. In this context, the translation of academic materials into national languages is increasingly recognized as a component of broader modernization strategies in higher education. In the context of globalization and increasing intercultural communication, translation plays a critical role in the transmission of knowledge, the development of education systems, and the promotion of scientific and cultural exchange [4]. For Kazakhstan, where national policy seeks to reinforce cultural identity while integrating into the global academic landscape, the translation of academic texts represents an essential component of educational reform. Translation not only broadens access to global scientific knowledge but also contributes to the development of academic discourse in the Kazakh language, thereby supporting its function as a language of education and scholarship [5].

Historically, translation has served as a key mechanism for the dissemination of scientific and philosophical knowledge, from the classical periods of Greek-Arabic-Latin transmission to the present-day efforts to globalize higher education [6, 7]. Contemporary educational initiatives continue to draw on this legacy. One notable example is Kazakhstan’s state-backed project “New Humanitarian Knowledge: 100 New Kazakh Textbooks,” initiated in 2017 under the leadership of former President Nursultan Nazarbayev [8]. Designed to improve the quality of higher education and expand access to world-class educational resources in the Kazakh language, the initiative focuses on translating foundational textbooks in philosophy, sociology, psychology, and related fields. The dual purpose is to make global academic content accessible to Kazakh-speaking students while also promoting the Kazakh language in academic settings [9]. Despite the scale of the project, questions remain regarding its actual contribution to the quality of higher education, particularly in terms of how students perceive and utilize the translated textbooks.

Despite the ambitious scope of the project, relatively little is known about how students themselves perceive the translated textbooks or to what extent they find them useful and accessible. While much of the existing literature emphasizes the policy dimensions of translation and the broader goals of educational modernization [10], empirical studies exploring the subjective experiences of students remain scarce. Although English is the dominant language in scientific publications, translation facilitates integration into the global educational community for countries that do not have English as the primary language of instruction [11]. In this sense, Kazakhstan’s efforts to translate key academic texts into Kazakh represent a strategic attempt to promote both educational inclusivity and linguistic sovereignty.

While the role of translation in education has been discussed in global contexts, few studies have examined large-scale, state-sponsored translation projects in non-English-speaking, post-Soviet countries. This study addresses that gap by analyzing Kazakhstan’s textbook translation initiative through the lens of student perception – an angle largely absent from existing research. Unlike most prior studies that focus on policy design or linguistic theory, this paper presents an empirical, user-centered account of how translated materials are received by end-users. This focus offers novel insights into the interface between translation, educational reform, and language policy.

This research therefore investigates students’ perceptions and attitudes toward the translated textbooks produced under the “100 New Kazakh Textbooks” project. Specifically, it focuses on their views regarding the quality of translation, the accessibility of materials, and their usefulness in supporting academic study. Rather than seeking to measure behavioral outcomes or learning performance, this study aims to capture how students interpret and evaluate their experience

with the translated materials. The empirical basis of the research is a structured survey conducted among 147 philosophy students at two major universities in Kazakhstan: Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. These institutions were chosen due to their academic prominence and their active use of translated textbooks in the humanities curriculum.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1 Translation and knowledge dissemination

Translation is among the most enduring forms of human activity, playing a pivotal social role in facilitating inter-lingual communication [12]. Since the advent of writing, translation has emerged as a pivotal instrument for disseminating knowledge, thereby rendering the cultural and scientific accomplishments of certain nations accessible to the broader global community [13]. The process of translation has been instrumental in fostering interaction and mutual enrichment among literature, philosophical ideas, and scientific knowledge across diverse civilizations [14].

Translation has long been recognized as a pivotal element in the dissemination of knowledge, the establishment of educational systems, and the sustenance of academic discourse on a global scale. Throughout history, translation has served as a conduit for the integration of diverse civilizations' achievements, thereby establishing the foundation for cultural exchange and scientific advancement. In the contemporary era, where English has emerged as the predominant language in scientific publishing, translation facilitates access to cutting-edge research for nations where English does not serve as the primary language of instruction [15].

The history of science and philosophy demonstrates that translation has played a pivotal role in the dissemination of knowledge and the development of academic traditions. During the classical and medieval periods, the translation of Greek, Arabic, and Latin texts into various languages has been instrumental in stimulating intellectual development [7]. During the 9th and 10th centuries, the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma) in Baghdad emerged as a pivotal hub for the translation of ancient works into Arabic, thereby fostering advancements in medicine, mathematics, and philosophy within the Islamic world. Subsequent centuries witnessed the translation of these works into Latin, which laid the foundation for the European Renaissance [16].

During the Enlightenment, translation played a pivotal role in the dissemination of advanced scientific ideas. The translation of French, German, and English philosophical works into various languages contributed to the establishment of national educational systems. Similarly, in the 20th century, the translation of textbooks and academic research facilitated the standardization of educational standards in different countries, integrating international experience into national educational systems [10].

In the contemporary world, English has emerged as the 21st-century's "lingua franca," playing a pivotal role in the internationalization of scientific knowledge [17]. In the context of globalization, English functions as a universal medium of communication among speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds. It prevails in academic discourse, being the language of distinguished conferences, scientific journals, and international research endeavors. Furthermore, English's growing prominence as an instructional medium in academic institutions worldwide underscores its significance in the dissemination of knowledge [11].

Notwithstanding the global preeminence of English, translation persists as a pivotal instrument for the preservation and advancement of national cultures and languages. As Schulte observes, translation entails more than merely the transfer of text from one language to another; it is also a process of transformation that necessitates a profound comprehension of the cultural context. The translator functions as a conduit between cultures, yet this conduit requires a propensity to engage in dialogue with the "other" [14]. Modern educational systems depend on translation as a means of facilitating academic mobility. The internationalization of higher education hinges on the accessibility of scientific publications in multiple languages, a necessity that translation fulfills [15]. In nations where English is not the primary language, the translation of educational materials enables integration into the global scientific community [18].

Several recent empirical investigations have highlighted the crucial function of translation and localization in improving the quality and inclusivity of higher education in non-Anglophone contexts. For instance, the localization of social science research in South Korea has been demonstrated to serve not only as a linguistic exercise, but also as a strategic alignment of global academic knowledge with national intellectual agendas [19]. In a similar manner, translation has been examined as a mediating entity between epistemological universality and local specificity, functioning as both an instrument of assimilation and a site of reflexive negotiation [20]. In the context of digital learning, the localization of Khan Academy into Azerbaijani has been shown to result in notable enhancements in learner engagement. These findings imply that the adaptation of educational content to cultural and linguistic nuances can lead to optimised pedagogical outcomes [21]. Analogous conclusions were derived from the examination of mobile learning in Kuwait, where the localization of educational content was identified as a pivotal factor in enhancing participation and comprehension, contingent upon its responsiveness to educational norms, cultural references, and learner expectations [22]. Subsequent research has advocated for interdisciplinary collaboration between translators and domain experts to address the technical and conceptual challenges of localizing specialized content [23]. Digitalization and open educational resources (OER) have also been identified as critical enablers of multilingual access to academic materials [24, 25], while some scholars emphasize the need to reform translator training curricula to meet the growing demands of educational localization [26]. A synthesis of these studies reveals a consensus that translation in education should not be regarded as a marginal activity, but rather as a deliberate strategy for promoting equity, epistemic pluralism, and national academic sovereignty within the context of a globalized knowledge economy. These findings underscore the notion that textbook translation is not merely a linguistic task but rather a pedagogical and cultural endeavor that influences how knowledge is perceived and internalized.

In this context, the “100 New Kazakh Textbooks” program in Kazakhstan serves as a case study of a targeted translation policy aimed at adapting global scientific achievements to the national educational system. The translation of textbooks on philosophy, sociology, economics, and other disciplines not only expands the access of Kazakh-speaking students to advanced scientific concepts but also plays a pivotal role in the establishment of an academic environment in the national language. This process contributes to the development of critical thinking, the unification of scientific terminology, and the strengthening of the intellectual independence of Kazakhstan.

In addition to its role in education, translation plays a significant part in the preservation and development of cultural identity. National language policies are designed to foster the creation of scientific and educational discourses in native languages, thereby reducing reliance on dominant languages [27]. The translation of textbooks on philosophy, sociology, psychology, and other disciplines into Kazakh has two primary benefits. First, it makes this knowledge available to students. Second, it contributes to the development of the Kazakh language as a language of science and education. This is especially important in the context of globalization, when small languages face the risk of marginalization. Translation allows for the preservation of cultural identity while integrating the national educational system into the global scientific space.

Translation exerts an influence on two fronts: first, it affects the accessibility of information, and second, it impacts the processes of cognitive perception. The theory of linguistic relativity [28] posits that language shapes thinking. That is to say, translation is not a neutral process; rather, it determines the ways in which knowledge is understood and interpreted. Research indicates that the quality of translation of educational materials directly affects student learning success [29]. To illustrate, a literal translation can render complex concepts difficult to comprehend, whereas an adapted translation can facilitate more accessible and understandable information. This is particularly salient in the humanities and social sciences, where terminology plays a pivotal role in understanding the subject [30].

Thus, translation plays a crucial role in the accessibility of scientific knowledge and the development of understanding of this knowledge. The effectiveness of translation, whether adapted or literal, directly affects the quality of education, especially in the humanities and social sciences. In this context, the “100 New Textbooks” project, implemented within the framework of the state program, is becoming an important step in improving the quality of educational materials. The objective of this initiative is to develop textbooks that are tailored to the contemporary requirements of students and that will facilitate the dissemination of knowledge to all segments of the population.

2 Translation as a catalyst for change in education

The translation tradition in Kazakhstan has deep historical roots dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, prominent Kazakh thinkers played a pivotal role in the development of national literature and the educational system. The foundational principles of this tradition were established by prominent educators such as Abai Kunanbayev, Shakarim Kudaibergenov, Alikhan Bokeikhanov, Akhmet Baitursynuly, and Mirzhakyp Dulatov. The endeavors of these figures were multifaceted, encompassing not only the preservation and advancement of Kazakh culture but also the dissemination of global intellectual achievements through the medium of translation [31; 32].

Abay Kunanbayev is widely regarded as the progenitor of the Kazakh artistic and philosophical translation school. His translations of the works of Pushkin, Lermontov, and Krylov were not literal renditions, but rather adaptations of the original texts that took into account the national specifics and cultural characteristics of the Kazakh people [33]. This approach not only facilitated the conveyance of artistic content but also ensured its comprehensibility for the Kazakh reader. Shakarim Kudaibergenov further advanced this tradition by translating classical works from the East and West, thereby contributing to the development of the philosophical worldview of the Kazakh intelligentsia [34].

At the beginning of the 20th century, Akhmet Baitursynuly and Mirzhakyp Dulatov established the foundations for the translation of scientific and journalistic texts. Their objective was to adapt world achievements in science and education to the needs of Kazakh society. Of particular note is the emphasis placed by Akhmet Baitursynuly on the standardization of the Kazakh language, the development of spelling and lexical norms, and the role these played in the creation of a unified translation system [35].

3 100 New Kazakh Textbooks project

Contemporary translation praxis in Kazakhstan, drawing upon a substantial historical legacy, is attaining a novel tier thanks to systemic initiatives that aspire to enhance the caliber of translation and its incorporation into the educational framework. A seminal undertaking in this domain is "New Humanitarian Knowledge: 100 New Kazakh Textbooks," which aims to adapt sophisticated scientific compositions for Kazakh-speaking students.

Prior to this project, a significant number of translations in Kazakhstan were executed using an intermediate language, most commonly Russian. This practice resulted in the loss of semantic nuances present in the original text, thereby complicating the comprehension of scientific material. In contrast to previous translation methodologies, this project made a radical departure from the intermediate language stage, opting instead for direct translation from the original language into Kazakh. This approach enabled the maintenance of academic precision and the avoidance of errors associated with double interpretation of the text [31].

The "100 New Kazakh Textbooks" project is a large-scale initiative that was launched in Kazakhstan in 2017 at the behest of the country's first President, Nursultan Nazarbayev. This initiative was part of a broader national program entitled "Rukhani Zhangyru" (Modernization of National Identity). The program's objective is to modernize public consciousness and develop national identity in the context of globalization [36]. The impetus for the creation of this project derived from the acknowledgment of the necessity to furnish students with the opportunity to engage with the most contemporary and pertinent world-class textbooks. Previously, students at Kazakhstani universities predominantly utilized textbooks in Russian or foreign literature, a practice that engendered specific impediments to the comprehensive comprehension and mastery of the material, particularly for those whose native language is Kazakh [37].

The objective of the initiative was to translate 100 of the world's most distinguished textbooks across various academic disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, political science, psychology, and cultural studies, into the Kazakh language. This initiative was designed to enable students to access knowledge and scientific concepts that are widely employed in leading universities globally in their native language. Additionally, the initiative sought to enhance the quality of education by providing students with access to contemporary and pertinent educational materials [38].

The project operator was the public (non-profit) foundation “Ulttyq Audarma Byurosy” (National Bureau of Translations). The objective of the project is to fortify the role of the humanities and social sciences in the higher education system of Kazakhstan through the creation of accessible and high-quality educational literature in the Kazakh language [38].

A salient feature of the project was the extensive involvement of representatives from the academic community of Kazakhstan. Approximately 300 specialists contributed to the translation and editing of educational materials, including faculty members from the nation's prominent universities, professional translators, and editors. This approach guaranteed not only the precision of the translation but also its academic adaptation, a pivotal consideration when dealing with educational texts comprising intricate terminology and scientific concepts [8]. To guarantee superior quality translation and ensure that textbooks align with contemporary scientific standards, a collaborative partnership was initiated with prominent global publishers, including Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Pearson, Cengage, Penguin Random House, and McMillan. This collaboration facilitated access to the most pertinent and sought-after academic publications, ensuring their adaptation to the Kazakh-speaking audience [31].

The project implementation included several stages. First, a careful selection of textbooks was carried out that met high international standards and could become the basis for teaching in Kazakhstani universities. This was followed by the translation process, which involved the best translators, academic editors and experts in the relevant fields of knowledge. After the translation was completed, the books underwent a process of editing and adaptation so that they met the educational standards and needs of Kazakhstani students [39].

The translated textbooks were printed in 10,000 copies and disseminated to 130 universities across the country, ensuring their extensive availability to students and educators. This extensive dissemination facilitated the incorporation of the new textbooks into the curricula of prominent Kazakhstani universities, thereby creating conditions for their active utilization in the educational process [31]. Moreover, the availability of the translated textbooks in electronic format expanded their reach to students, including those in remote regions, thereby ensuring comprehensive access. Consequently, the project not only modernized the content of humanitarian education but also facilitated equitable access to global scientific achievements for a substantial academic audience in Kazakhstan.

METHODOLOGY

1 Research design

This study adopted a quantitative survey design to investigate students' perceptions of translated textbooks used in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. The goal was to assess the perceived quality, accessibility, digital integration, and educational value of these materials.

A structured questionnaire was developed, comprising five thematic sections, each corresponding to a key dimension of the study:

1. Frequency and context of textbook use
2. Perceived usefulness and clarity of the content
3. Evaluation of translation quality
4. Accessibility (physical and digital)
5. Availability and effectiveness of online learning resources

The questionnaire included a mix of Likert-scale items (ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree) and multiple-choice questions, allowing for both quantitative assessment and descriptive insights into students' experiences.

Prior to data collection, the instrument was pilot-tested with a small group of students to assess the clarity of questions, internal consistency, and reliability of the scales. Feedback from the pre-test was used to refine ambiguous items and improve the overall structure of the questionnaire.

The survey design allowed the researchers to collect self-reported data on student perceptions, which, while not capturing behavioral outcomes, provides a valuable foundation for understanding the subjective dimensions of students' interaction with translated academic content.

2 Participants

The participants of this study were undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in philosophy programs at two of Kazakhstan's leading institutions of higher education: Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. These universities were selected purposively due to their academic prominence, their active engagement with translated academic materials, and their role in implementing the "100 New Kazakh Textbooks" initiative within the humanities.

A total of 147 students participated in the survey during the 2023–2024 academic year. The sample was selected based on its relevance to the study's focus, as philosophy is one of the disciplines that benefited most from the translation project, with 17 core textbooks translated into Kazakh (see Table 1). Compared to other disciplines, this represents a relatively high concentration of translated materials, making philosophy an ideal field for analyzing translation quality, content accessibility, and student perceptions. Moreover, philosophy as a discipline requires the accurate transmission of abstract concepts and precise terminology, thereby demanding a particularly high standard of translation. This further justifies its selection as a case study.

The sample size (N=147) is consistent with established methodological standards in social science research, where samples ranging from 100 to 200 participants are often considered sufficient for identifying patterns within a defined target group [40-42]. While the sample is not intended to be nationally representative, it provides meaningful insights into the experiences of students who are directly engaged with translated textbooks.

Three primary factors influenced the scope of the sample:

1. Availability of respondents during the survey period;
2. Voluntary participation, ensuring informed consent and ethical integrity;
3. Project-based logistical limitations, particularly in terms of access and timeframe within the academic calendar.

Table 1

Translated textbooks on philosophy within the framework of the project "100 new textbooks"

No	Author(s)	Title	Year of publication	Publisher	Themes
1	Anthony Kenny	<i>A New History of Western Philosophy, Vol. I: Ancient Philosophy</i>	2007	Oxford University Press	Ancient Philosophy
2	Anthony Kenny	<i>A New History of Western Philosophy, Vol. II: Medieval Philosophy</i>	2007	Oxford University Press	Medieval Philosophy
3	Bertrand Russell	<i>History of Western Philosophy</i>	1996	Routledge	History of Philosophy
4	Fung Yu-lan	<i>A Short History of Chinese Philosophy</i>	1976	The Free Press	Chinese Philosophy
5	Jon McGinnis, David C. Reisman	<i>Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources</i>	2007	Hackett Publishing Company	Arabic Philosophy
6	Anthony Kenny	<i>A New History of Western Philosophy, Vol. III: The Rise of Modern Philosophy</i>	2007	Oxford University Press	Modern Philosophy
7	Anthony Kenny	<i>A New History of Western Philosophy, Vol. IV: Philosophy in the Modern World</i>	2007	Oxford University Press	Modern Philosophy

8	Derek Johnston	<i>A Brief History of Philosophy: From Socrates to Derrida</i>	2006	A&C Black	History of Philosophy
9	Richard Eldridge	<i>An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art, 2nd ed.</i>	2014	Cambridge University Press	Aesthetics
10	Jonathan Wolff	<i>An Introduction to Political Philosophy, 3rd ed.</i>	2016	Oxford University Press	Political Philosophy
11	Barbara MacKinnon, Andrew Fiala	<i>Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues, 9th ed.</i>	2018	Cengage Learning	Ethics
12	Thomas P. Kasulis	<i>Engaging Japanese Philosophy: A Short History</i>	2018	University of Hawai Press	Japanese Philosophy
13	Purushottama Bilimoria	<i>History of Indian Philosophy</i>	2018	Routledge	Indian Philosophy
14	Khaled El-Rouayheb, Sabine Schmidtke	<i>The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy</i>	2019	Oxford University Press	Islamic Philosophy
15	Remi Hess	<i>25 livres clés de la philosophie</i>	2017	Marabout	General Philosophy
16	Gilles Deleuze	<i>Cinéma 2: L'image-temps</i>	1983	Les Editions de Minuit	Philosophy of Cinema
17	Gilles Deleuze	<i>Cinéma 1: L'image-mouvement</i>	1983	Les Editions de Minuit	Philosophy of Cinema

3 Data collection tools and procedure

Data was collected through a structured online survey, administered via Google Forms, which ensured broad accessibility, user-friendly participation, and high-quality data capture. The digital format allowed for efficient distribution and minimized human error in data recording. The average time required to complete the survey was 10 to 15 minutes. The survey link was disseminated through university mailing lists, student platforms, and relevant social media channels associated with the participating institutions. Prior to its official launch, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing with a group of 20 students, which allowed for the refinement of question phrasing and structure to improve clarity and reliability.

The finalized survey instrument consisted of four thematic sections; each aimed at evaluating a specific dimension of students' experience with translated textbooks:

1. Educational Experience

Assessed the frequency of use of translated textbooks, their perceived usefulness in understanding academic content, their contribution to students' educational engagement, and students' language preferences for instructional materials.

2. Translation Quality

Evaluated students' general impressions of translation quality, focusing on the clarity, coherence, and terminological accuracy of the translated texts. It also measured students' confidence in the equivalence between the translated and original content.

3. Textbook Accessibility

Explored the perceived availability of the translated textbooks, including access to printed and digital versions, and any difficulties encountered in obtaining the materials.

4. Online Learning

Investigated the use of digital resources, such as online versions of textbooks and video lectures. This section also measured students' levels of engagement with online learning formats and tools.

This mixed-format questionnaire, combining Likert-scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions, enabled the collection of both quantitative metrics and qualitative insights into students' interactions with translated academic materials.

4 Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, which allowed for a systematic summarization and interpretation of the prevailing trends in respondents' answers. The analysis included the calculation of means, frequency distributions, and percentage values across various survey items. These methods were deemed appropriate given the categorical and ordinal nature of the variables, as well as the sample size of 147 participants. The primary aim of the study – to explore and describe students' perceptions of translated textbooks – further justified the selection of descriptive statistics as the analytical approach. Descriptive analysis facilitated the identification of patterns and variations across the four key indicators: translation quality, accessibility, integration into online learning, and overall contribution to the educational experience. The results are presented in the form of tables and visual charts to enhance clarity and facilitate comparative interpretation across different response categories.

RESULTS

1 Educational experience

The results of the analysis demonstrated that two-thirds of respondents (66%) utilize the translated textbooks of the "100 New Kazakh Textbooks" project with varying degrees of regularity (see Figure 1). Specifically, 28.6% of students noted that they often refer to these materials, and 33.3% use them periodically, indicating a demand for translated textbooks among students. However, 32.7% of respondents indicated infrequent use of these materials, and only 5.4% reported their constant use in the educational process.

A multitude of factors may be responsible for observed differences in usage, including the extent to which translated materials are adapted to the curriculum, the availability of printed and digital versions, and the level of instructional support from teachers. The data underscore the necessity for further analysis to identify key barriers to the broader utilization of translated textbooks and potential strategies for overcoming them.

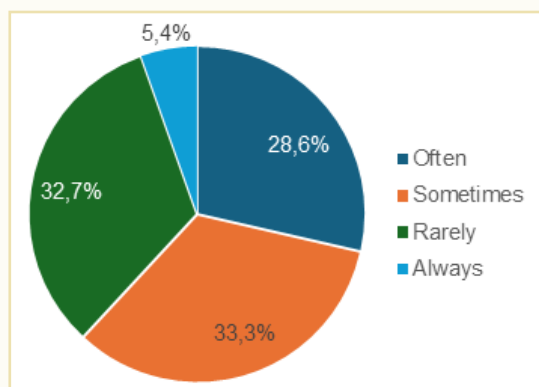


Figure 1 Incorporation of "100 New Kazakh Textbooks" into Educational Process

The subsequent phase of the study involved an evaluation of the efficacy of translated textbooks. The data analysis revealed that the majority of respondents (73.5%) expressed a favorable opinion regarding the importance of these materials for the educational process (see Figure 2). Specifically, 46.3% of students found the translated materials to be useful, while 27.2% deemed them to be highly useful. These findings suggest that the translated textbooks generally meet the educational needs of students and facilitate the assimilation of educational topics.

Concurrently, 23.1% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, a finding that may signal variations in the caliber of translation, challenges in adapting content to the local educational milieu, or individual student predilections. The negligible proportion of respondents (less than 5%) who regard the translated textbooks as futile underscores the project’s substantial fulfillment of the objectives of modernizing higher education. Nonetheless, the outcomes underscore the necessity for additional refinement of both the translation process and methodological approaches to incorporating translated materials into curricula.

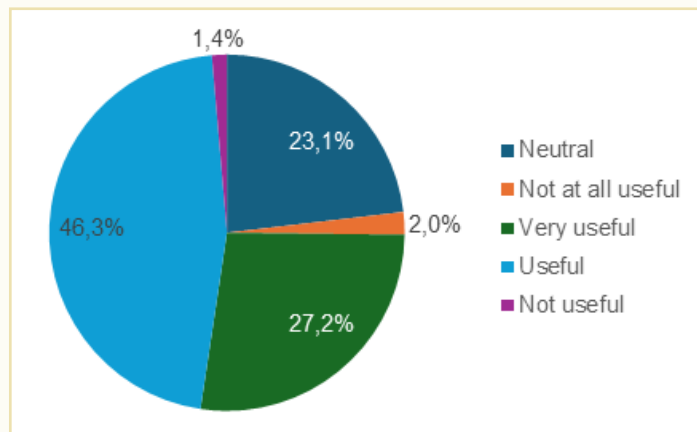


Figure 2 Perceived usefulness of textbooks translated under the “100 New Kazakh Textbooks” project

The findings on the perception of translated textbooks are noteworthy. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (59.9%) acknowledged the positive contribution of these materials to their educational experience (see Figure 3). This suggests that translated textbooks play a significant role in facilitating the assimilation of academic disciplines and are effectively integrated into the educational process. However, 38.8% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, which may suggest that the translated textbooks exert minimal influence on their learning. This outcome may be attributable to several factors, including variations in teaching methodologies, the extent of students' preparation, and the particularities of the subjects studied. For instance, some students may be more accustomed to utilizing original texts in Russian or English, which diminishes their engagement with translated materials.

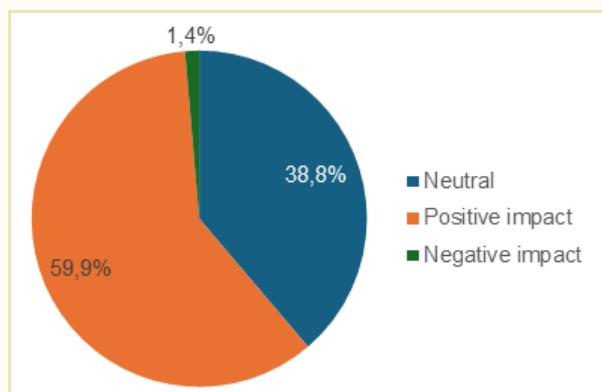


Figure 3 Perceived contribution of translated textbooks to students’ educational experience

A negligible percentage of respondents (less than 2%) conveyed a negative sentiment regarding the translated textbooks. This observation may be attributed to challenges in adapting to novel educational materials, potential inadequacies in the quality of the translation, or the incongruity of textbook content with the specific requirements of individual courses. These factors necessitate further investigation, as students’ perception of the materials’ effectiveness is contingent on the quality of the translation and integration of materials.

Turning now to the analysis of students' preferences regarding the language versions of textbooks, the research data (see Figure 4) indicate that nearly half of the respondents (49.7%) prefer the Kazakh version. This suggests a significant demand for adapted materials that consider the unique characteristics of the local educational context. These findings underscore the importance of translating textbooks as a means of enhancing knowledge accessibility and integrating the Kazakh language into academic discourse.

Concurrently, 23.8% of respondents indicated that all versions of textbooks (Kazakh, Russian, and English) are equally effective. This observation may suggest a flexible approach among students toward the perception of educational materials and their capacity to adapt to varying language formats. For instance, some students can effortlessly transition between languages, contingent on the complexity of the subject matter or the availability of materials.

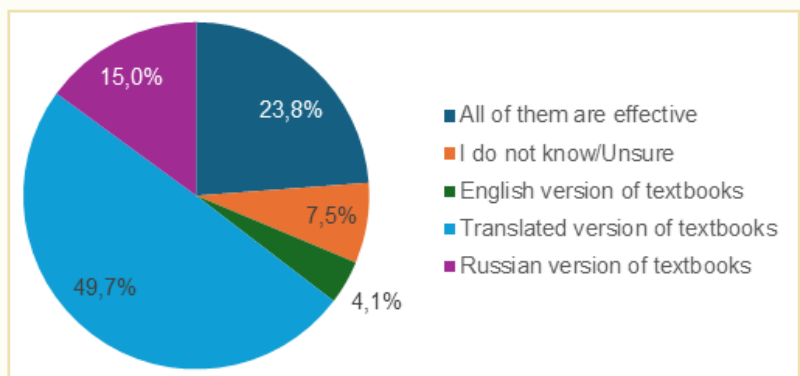


Figure 4 Respondents' preferences in choosing the language version of textbooks

The Russian (15.0%) and English (4.0%) versions of the textbooks received comparatively less support. This phenomenon may be attributed to the students' level of language proficiency and the extent to which the original editions meet their educational needs. For instance, students with poor English proficiency may be reluctant to use English-language textbooks, even if they contain more up-to-date information.

It is noteworthy that 7.5% of respondents found it difficult to answer. This may indicate a lack of awareness of the differences between the language versions or a lack of a clear preference. When considered together, the data highlights a strong demand for Kazakh-language learning materials. However, the parallel existence of several language versions continues to play an important role in the educational process, providing students with a choice and promoting multilingual learning.

The research data presented in Figure 5 demonstrates the prevalence of positive assessments regarding students' satisfaction with how the translated textbooks supported their learning process. The maximum level of satisfaction (5 points) was indicated by 37.4% of respondents, indicating a high degree of recognition of the effectiveness of the translated educational materials. An additional 27.2% of respondents selected a rating of 4 points, suggesting significant satisfaction and validating the efficacy of textbook translation for educational activities.

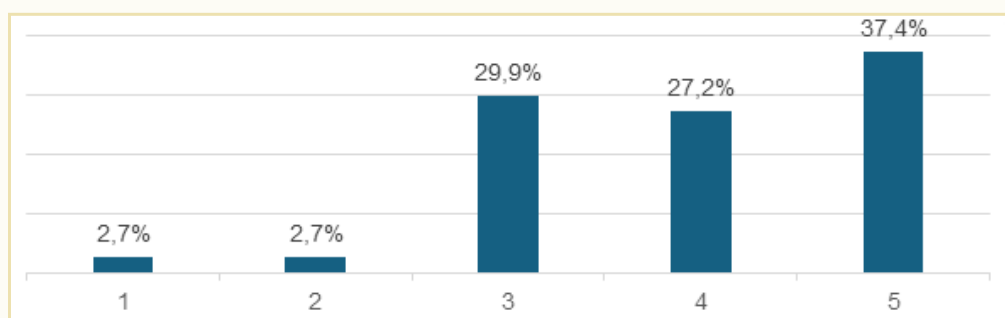


Figure 5 Level of student satisfaction with how translated textbooks supported their learning experience

The significant proportion of positive feedback indicates the critical role that translated textbooks play in establishing an academic environment that is customized to students' needs. Nevertheless, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of translated materials, it is essential to analyze the responses of student groups who expressed lower levels of satisfaction. For instance, 18.4% of respondents evaluated their satisfaction as 3, suggesting a neutral stance or the existence of specific impediments, such as challenges in adapting to new materials or deficiencies in the quality of the translation.

Furthermore, 12.2% of students selected grades 1 and 2, suggesting a suboptimal level of satisfaction. These outcomes may be associated with the discrepancy between the translated textbooks and students' expectations, inadequate material availability, or challenges in utilizing the textbooks effectively. These factors necessitate further investigation, as they may signify areas for enhancement in both the translation process and the integration of textbooks into the educational curriculum.

2 Quality of translated textbooks

Students' satisfaction with translated textbooks is largely determined not only by their substantive value, but also by the quality of the translation, which affects the accuracy of the transfer of scientific concepts and the ease of perception of the material. In this regard, it is important to consider how students assess the level of translation of textbooks within the framework of the "100 New Kazakh Textbooks" project.

The research data presented in Figure 6 indicates that the majority of respondents offer positive ratings. Specifically, 45.6% of respondents consider the translation quality to be "good," while an additional 22.4% rate it as "very good." These results suggest that a significant proportion of students perceive the translated materials as adequately meeting their educational needs. Nevertheless, 25.9% of respondents evaluated the translation quality as "moderate," suggesting the presence of deficiencies that could compromise satisfaction. For instance, students may confront terminological inaccuracies, stylistic inconsistencies with academic standards, or challenges in adapting materials to the local educational context.

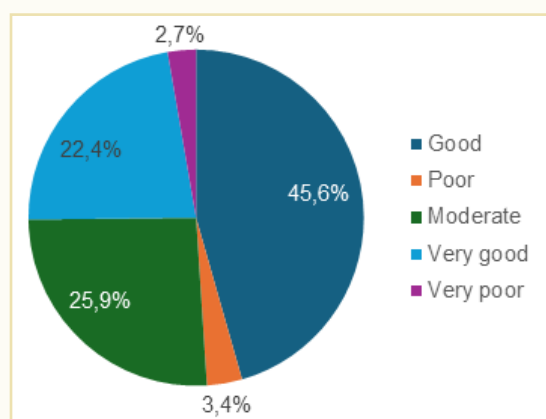


Figure 6 Evaluation of the quality of translation of textbooks

The proportion of respondents who provided negative assessments is relatively low; 3.4% rated the translations as "very poor" and 2.7% as "poor." However, the existence of these ratings indicates the necessity for further work on the quality of the translations. These assessments may be related to specific problems, such as translation errors, insufficient clarity of presentation, or the content of the textbooks not meeting students' expectations.

The comprehensive evaluation of the data suggests an overall positive trend in the perception of the quality of the translation, yet the critical comments identified underscore the necessity for further editorial and terminological enhancements. Further investigation into the factors influencing the perception of translated textbooks may contribute to enhancing their quality and more effective integration into the educational process.

Figure 7 indicates that a considerable proportion of respondents (66.0%) encountered challenges related to the ambiguous translation of terms or concepts in textbooks published under the auspices of the project “100 new textbooks in the Kazakh language.” This finding signifies the existence of lexical-semantic and terminological issues, which can be attributed to various factors, including the intricacies of translation strategies, inadequate adaptation of academic discourse in the Kazakh language, or the lack of uniform standards for terminological equivalence.

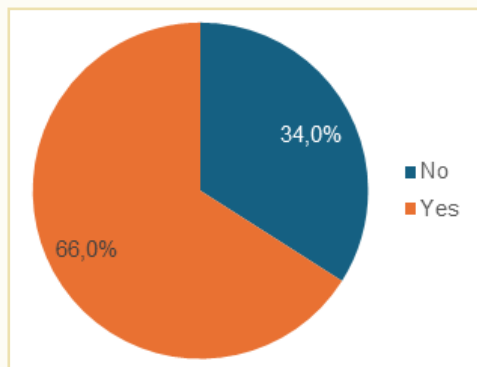


Figure 7 Encounters with unclear terminology in translated textbooks

A comparison of the data set with the number of respondents who did not encounter such difficulties (34.0%) suggests that the issue of terminological transparency is selective, affecting specific disciplines or user groups. This finding may indicate heterogeneity in the quality of translation among different textbooks, which necessitates further investigation within specific subject areas.

Moreover, the high incidence of terminological difficulties signifies the necessity for additional efforts to standardize terminology and enhance scientific translation mechanisms. In the long term, this may encompass the development of specialized glossaries, engaging experts in pertinent disciplines in the translation process, and implementing the practice of back translation to assess the adequacy of conceptual interpretation.

The assessment of the accuracy of conveying the meaning of the original texts within the framework of the project “100 New Kazakh Textbooks” demonstrates a multidirectional distribution of respondents’ opinions (Figure 8). The majority of survey participants rated the accuracy of the translation at 36.7% or 30.6%, indicating their perception of the translations as moderately accurate or rather accurate, respectively. Conversely, 21.8% of respondents assigned the highest rating (5), suggesting a group of users who expressed complete confidence in the quality of the translations.

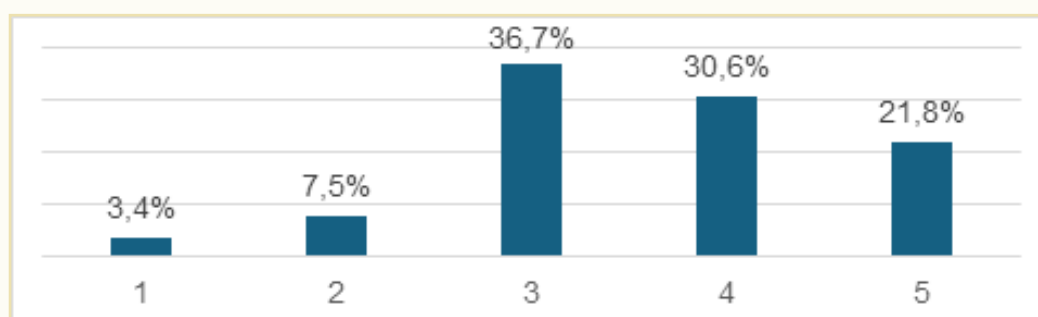


Figure 8 Accuracy of the translation

Nevertheless, 7.5% of respondents selected rating 2, while 3.4% opted for the minimum rating of 1. This suggests that a considerable proportion of respondents’ harbor reservations concerning the adequacy of the transmission of the original meanings. These data imply the presence of certain issues in the translation, which may pertain to terminological accuracy, stylistic adaptation, or the interpretation of complex concepts.

Notwithstanding the pervasive positive perception of the quality of the translation, a significant proportion of respondents (26.3%) articulated a deficiency in confidence regarding its precision. This underscores the necessity for a more profound examination of the translated materials, an identification of potential inadequacies, and a potential revision of textbooks to accommodate the particularities of scientific and educational texts.

Figure 9 indicates a notable tendency among respondents to express support for the concept of enhancing the quality of translated textbooks within the context of the “100 New Textbooks in the Kazakh Language” initiative. Approximately 79% of respondents concurred with the necessity to upgrade the existing materials, signifying a demand for the enhancement of educational content.

This result can be interpreted in the context of several factors. Firstly, it may reflect certain difficulties faced by users of translated textbooks, including possible problems with the adaptation of terminology, style of presentation or completeness of the presented material. Secondly, the high proportion of positive responses may indicate a general trend towards increasing requirements for educational literature, which corresponds to modern standards of the academic environment.

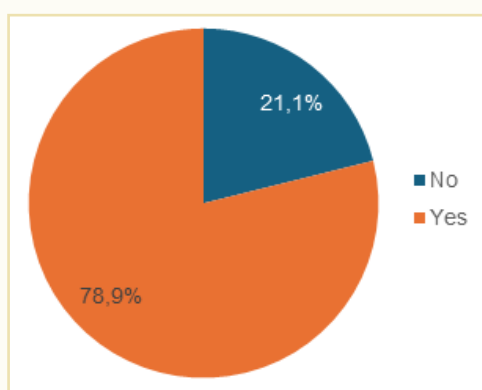


Figure 9 The necessity of improving the translated textbooks

A survey of respondents revealed that less than 22% expressed no desire for further improvement of textbooks. This finding may be indicative of their satisfaction with the current quality of materials or their lack of involvement in their use. However, the responses were found to be disproportionate, indicating that the vast majority consider further development of translated textbooks a priority.

The findings underscore the necessity for a systematic approach to enhance the quality of translated textbooks, encompassing not only the rectification of potential inaccuracies but also the adaptation of materials to align with the educational requirements and expectations of students and educators.

3 Availability of translated textbooks

Despite the favorable quality assessment of translated textbooks, their effective integration into the educational process is contingent on the availability of materials. Data analysis (Figure 10) reveals that 41.5% of respondents perceive access to translated textbooks as straightforward, with an additional 15.6% categorizing it as highly straightforward. This suggests that a considerable proportion of students do not encounter significant impediments in locating and utilizing these materials.

A modest yet noteworthy proportion of respondents (approximately 6%) reported encountering challenges in acquiring textbooks. These difficulties may be attributed to factors such as a shortage of printed copies, technical issues in accessing electronic versions, or restricted distribution of materials within academic institutions.

The data obtained demonstrate that, despite the overall positive trend, the issue of accessibility remains unresolved for some students. In the context of educational policy, it is imperative to

acknowledge that equal access to educational materials is a fundamental element for successful learning. The identified difficulties necessitate further analysis to ensure that educational policies and practices are effective in facilitating equitable learning opportunities for all students.

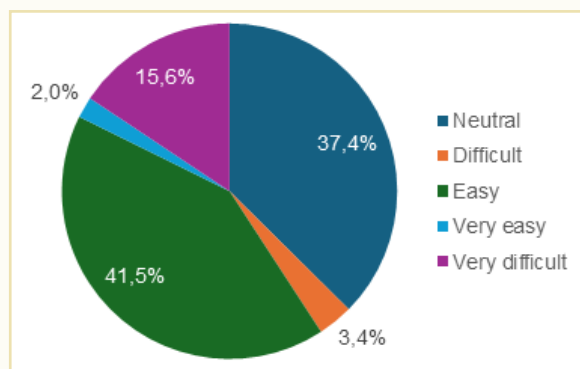


Figure 10 Availability of translated textbooks

4 Online learning opportunity

The availability of learning materials is an important factor in students' learning experiences, but so is the use of digital resources that enhance learning opportunities and increase their flexibility. In this context, it is important to consider how actively students use online versions of translated textbooks and video lectures.

As illustrated in Figure 11, the majority of respondents (36.7%) periodically access digital versions of translated textbooks or video lectures, indicating a moderate, though not universal, integration of these resources into the learning process. Concurrently, 19% of students use these materials on a regular basis, while 29.3% note that they use them only occasionally. The proportion of students who actively use online resources remains relatively small; only 5.4% of respondents reported using them frequently, while 9.5% do not have access to them at all.

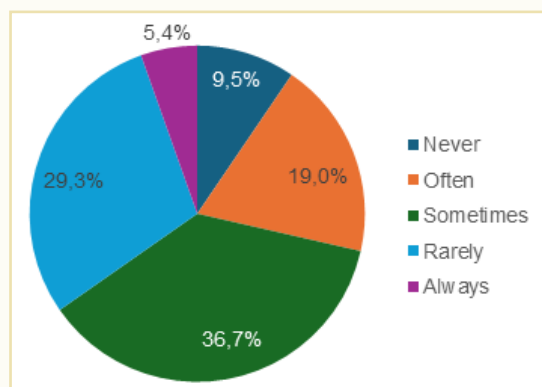


Figure 11 Using online versions of translated textbooks

The findings of this study suggest that, despite the accessibility of digital textbooks, a considerable proportion of students either do not perceive them as an integral component of the educational process or encounter certain barriers that impede their utilization. Potential factors contributing to this phenomenon include a lack of awareness regarding these resources, subjective evaluations of their quality and relevance, and technical limitations such as slow internet connectivity or the absence of convenient access to electronic platforms. The observed heterogeneity in the adoption of digital educational materials underscores the necessity for further investigation into the factors that hinder their more widespread integration. Future research may be directed towards the identification of specific strategies to enhance student engagement in online learning and optimize the digital educational environment.

It is imperative to not only assess the availability of these materials but also to understand how actively they are utilized in the educational process. The results of the analysis (Figure 12) indicate that student engagement in online learning remains moderate. The majority of respondents (46.3%) described their participation as “moderate,” and 27.2% reported a “high” level of engagement. Conversely, only 14.3% of respondents rated their participation as “very high,” indicating the presence of an active, albeit relatively small, group of users who regularly interact with digital educational materials.

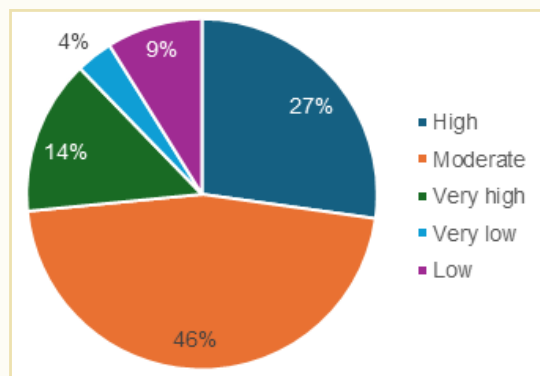


Figure 12 Participation in online learning linked to translated textbooks

Contrary to the aforementioned data, 8.8% of respondents indicated a “low” level of engagement, and 3.4% reported a “very low” level of participation. This suggests the presence of barriers hindering the utilization of online educational resources. Potential impediments include digital literacy levels, the convenience and accessibility of online educational platforms, and the degree to which digital content aligns with students’ academic needs.

While the data suggests a moderately positive trend in the use of online education, it is evident that a considerable proportion of students either have little engagement or do not utilize this format at all. This underscores the necessity for continued enhancement of digital educational strategies aimed at fostering increased student engagement and the removal of existing barriers. Subsequent research could concentrate on ascertaining the most effective methods for integrating online resources into the learning process, along with the development of metrics to boost their accessibility and adapt them to students’ requirements.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illustrate the intricate interplay between the process of translating educational materials and the extent of their acceptance among students. As elucidated in the theoretical section, translation serves as a pivotal function in the dissemination of knowledge and the integration of local educational systems into the global academic domain. However, the empirical evidence collected indicates that the level of engagement in online learning activities associated with the translated textbooks from the “100 New Textbooks in the Kazakh Language” project remains moderate. This observation necessitates further analysis to identify the factors that influence the acceptance and utilization of translated educational materials.

First, the findings confirm that although a sizable proportion of students actively use translated textbooks, their level of engagement in online learning varies. According to the theory of linguistic relativity [28], language plays an important role in cognitive processes. This indicates the need to adapt translated texts to ensure their accessibility and effectiveness. Research indicates that successful comprehension is contingent not only on the quality of the translation, but also on the alignment of terminology and concepts with the expectations of the target audience [30].

Secondly, the observed variations in the evaluation of students’ engagement may be attributable to the idiosyncrasies inherent in the perception of translated texts. As discussed in the theoretical

framework, the translation process entails a degree of adaptation, interpretation, and adaptation of knowledge within a novel linguistic context [14]. In this case, the use of translated textbooks contributes to the development of the Kazakh language as an academic tool. However, it also requires careful consideration of the methodological aspects of teaching in Kazakh. This is consistent with the arguments of Pym, Malmkjær [18] on the need to develop localized educational strategies to improve the effectiveness of translation.

The third salient aspect pertains to the role of translation in preserving and cultivating the national scientific environment. As Baker [27] observes, translation facilitates access to knowledge and concurrently contributes to the shaping of academic culture. In the context of Kazakhstan, the "100 New Textbooks" project constitutes a component of a broader strategy to fortify intellectual autonomy and broaden the scientific base in the state language. However, an analysis of the data obtained reveals that the mere presence of translated textbooks does not invariably ensure a high level of student engagement. This finding underscores the necessity for additional measures to integrate translated materials into the educational process, including the development of methodological recommendations and the creation of interactive learning formats.

The analysis of the collected data enables the formulation of several conclusions. First, translation serves as a pivotal mechanism for integrating local academic traditions into the global scientific arena, with its effectiveness contingent upon the quality of adaptation of the materials utilized. Second, the perception of translated texts is influenced by their accessibility and alignment with students' expectations. Third, translation exerts a substantial influence on the development of national educational discourse, a phenomenon that ought to be bolstered by institutional initiatives and methodological support. Subsequent research endeavors could focus on the qualitative analysis of students' perceptions of translated textbooks, as well as the extent to which these materials support or hinder academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of translated textbooks introduced through Kazakhstan's "100 New Kazakh Textbooks" initiative, with a specific focus on accessibility, translation quality, and their perceived role in supporting the educational process. The findings suggest that the majority of students value the availability of translated materials in the Kazakh language and recognize their potential to facilitate comprehension of complex academic content. However, the study also identified recurring issues such as inconsistent terminology, limited adaptation to local academic contexts, and challenges in accessing digital versions.

While these results provide meaningful insights into how students engage with translated textbooks, it is important to note that this research focused solely on self-reported perceptions. It did not examine behavioral outcomes or academic performance indicators. Therefore, the study should be seen as a foundational step toward understanding students' attitudes, rather than a conclusive evaluation of the actual educational effectiveness or long-term impact of translated materials.

The data point to the need for a more robust institutional framework for the integration of translated content, including improved editorial practices, terminology harmonization, and clearer pedagogical guidelines for instructors. Enhancing student access to digital versions and increasing awareness of existing online platforms could improve the usability of the materials. In addition, developing interactive methods of instruction that actively incorporate translated textbooks may increase student engagement.

Future studies should employ mixed-method approaches – including classroom observations, focus groups, and academic performance analysis – to provide a more comprehensive picture of how translated textbooks function in practice. Expanding the scope to include other disciplines and comparing student experiences across fields would also help assess whether the challenges observed in philosophy education are unique or part of broader systemic patterns.

Despite its focus on perceptions, this study contributes a unique empirical perspective by analyzing a large-scale, state-led academic translation initiative in a non-Anglophone, post-Soviet context –

an area that remains underexplored in educational and translation studies. While prior research has often treated translated textbooks as secondary tools within the curriculum, this study positions them as central agents of language policy, localization of global knowledge, and epistemological access. Furthermore, by examining translated philosophical literature – a discipline where terminological and conceptual precision is critical – the study offers rare insights into the limits of equivalence and the challenges of culturally embedded academic translation. This situates the study at the intersection of education reform, linguistic equity, and knowledge transfer, expanding the theoretical and geographic scope of current debates in the field.

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