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A Conflict of State-led Initiative and Economic Rationality: Focusing on the State Language and Lingua Franca in Uzbekistan[*]

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Abstract: To untangle the root of contradictions across linguistic development in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, we explicitly introduce linguistic factors into the transaction cost theory of new institutional economics and the concepts of institutional connectivity and complementarity proposed by comparative institutional analysis in an attempt to construct a theoretical framework for comprehending the dilemma between the state-led initiative and economic rationality regarding linguistic issues in the post-Soviet space. In light of these theoretical considerations, we propose three types of conceptual institutional settings and examine a case study of Uzbekistan that lacks robustness of institutional complementarity for implementing the effective language policies.

JEL classification numbers: P21, P52, Z13

Key words: transaction costs, institutional complementarity, state language, lingua franca, Uzbekistan

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Introduction

A bold summary of the main argument of *Language and Economy*, written by Florian Coulmas, a pioneering linguist who straightforwardly tackled the problem of interdependency between the two, gives us the next five points of contention: (1) Language is a commodity that can be evaluated as a utility value and an exchange value; (2) There is a certain relationship between economic development/modernisation and language development/modernisation; (3) Language has a calculable aspect, in the sense that a cost-benefit analysis is applicable under given conditions; (4) Economic factors work on the rise and fall of language; (5) The language system and economic system have several things in common. Based on these arguments, Coulmas draws such a provocative conclusion that one constituent of the economic utility of languages is their internal economy, which grows out of the necessity for human beings to apply the means for achieving communication economically (Coulmas 1992, p. 293).

Since the mid-1950s, the concepts and terms of economics have been incorporated into linguistics;[1] however, a full-fledged development of language economics started around the mid-1990s, and many researchers have debated 'language as a commodity' (Sano 2017). According to François Grin, a leading expert on this field, significant research interest in language economics was certainly influenced by three far-reaching events that occurred in the early 1990s—the fall of the Berlin Wall, technical progress in telecommunications, and the rapid progress of globalisation (Grin 2016). Of these, the first contextual element can be regarded as a driving force for boosting the development of language economics because the (re)appearance of a number of nation states after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia has resulted in numerous state and official languages, some of which were not even acknowledged as languages (e.g. the Bosnian language). This movement brings the effectiveness and fairness of language policies to the fore within the context of multilingualism in the contemporary world.[2] As can be seen from more complicated language management inside the European Union (EU) that is associated with the accession of 11 Central and Eastern European countries,[3] the necessity of policy action for newly born state languages in the former Communist bloc does not remain within the countries concerned, but also spills over to international organisations

[1] The first such attempt is said to be André Martinet's French monograph, *Économie des changements phonétiques*, published in 1955 (Gazzola *et al.* 2016).

[2] See a few articles included in *Transition*, 2, 24 (29 November 1996), for the early linguistic circumstances in post-independence Central and Eastern European and former Soviet Union countries. As for the more recent development of language policies and realities, some selective works are Andrews (2008), Kellner-Heinkele & Landau (2012), Ryazanova-Clarke (2014), Sloboda *et al.* (2016), Andrews (2018), and Mustajoki *et al.* (2020).

[3] The EU has 24 official languages as of this writing. Since every time new members have joined the EU, they have added to the number of official languages, the number of their official languages has more than doubled since the turn of the 21st century. See 'EU languages', *European Union*, 28 July 2020, available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-languages_en, accessed 14 July 2021.

and even third-party sovereign states. To cite an example, the Japanese government decided to change the official Japanese signage of *Sakartvelo (საქართველო)* from Russified *Gruziya (グルジア)* to Anglicised *Georgia (ジョージア)* in April 2015 in response to a request from the Georgian government;[4] the Russian language is no more than a foreign language since the Georgian language was legally defined as the single state language as well as the language for interethnic communication within the country (Khruslov 2006).

Numerous countries have designated their state languages and/or official languages in their constitutions and language laws, which suggests that language traditionally belongs to a territory where a state-led initiative has been actively presented. Also, a specific language capability assumes the character of public good to a great extent, although it is apparently specific to each person. This is partly attributable to the fact that language education has been vigorously promoted by authorities in most of the world. It is reasonable to ensure that the formation and enhancement of language capabilities are incorporated into public education, since they are acknowledged as having a public significance, not just for maximising benefits for individuals' future careers. In other words, a positive externality exists for the absorption of language skills; thus, government commitments are indispensable for the appropriate management of language education. Therefore, in theory, language economics is the field in which state-led initiatives can be developed. In fact, in Uzbekistan, our target country in this paper, and other Central Asian countries, it often happens that high-ranking executive officials, including presidents of republics, point out some specific languages their constituents should acquire and/or refer to the prevalence of some minority tongues in an apparent expression of displeasure.[5] On the other hand, it is not uncommon to publicise language policies, the contents of which are far detached from the realities of the use of language in daily life; in this case, these policies are stuck between political goals and economic effects, typically ending in a stalemate. Specifically, around the time of independence, all post-Soviet Union countries, except for Russia, have changed their linguistic hierarchies by putting their titular languages first and the Russian language second or later. This causes conflict between the state-led initiative and economic rationality, in the sense that the politically motivated promotion of a titular language as superior or a state language cannot be compatible with the versatility of the Russian language, which has been one of world's dominant languages and explores its functionality as an international business language as opposed to English in the post-Soviet territories. In reality, the development of some ethnic languages does not lead

[4] 'Jojia (Georgia)', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, 23 June 2021, available at: https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/georgia/index.html, accessed 14 July 2021.

[5] It is reported that authorities in Tajikistan that ended the use of Russian as a de facto official language within the country have recently complained about the growing influence on Tajik of Farsi and Dari, which are spoken in Afghanistan. See 'Tajikistan to fine reporters for using words not known to readers', *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 2 August 2016, available at: https://www.rferl.org/a/tajjikistan-complicated-words-journalists-fined/27895418.html, accessed 2 July 2021.

directly to the nullification of Russian or de-Russification in the area. Thus, it is very common that some bilingual or more multilingual people cannot unilaterally choose which language is their first or mother tongue (Odagiri 2012, 2015; Yanagida 2020).[6]

In this paper, following the discussions of language economics or economic linguistics, as well as the considerable results of language studies in the fields of international management, business, and economics,[7] we explicitly introduce linguistic factors into the transaction cost theory of new institutional economics and such concepts of institutional connectivity and complementarity proposed by comparative institutional analysis in an attempt to construct a theoretical framework for comprehending the dilemma between state-led initiative and economic rationality regarding linguistic issues (Sections 1 and 2). In light of these theoretical considerations, we conceptually propose three types of institutional settings: 'language planning reliant on the Russian language', 'language planning independent of the Russian language', and 'the language state of things inseparable from the Russian language'. Then, moving on to a case study of Uzbekistan that is classified as the last linguistic pattern, we concretely discuss the realities of conflict between the main titular languages or the languages of nation states as an integral part of their nationalities and ethnic identities and the Russian language still being a powerful common business language or lingua franca[8] in the post-Soviet economic space (Section 3). This section describes specific features of the local linguistic circumstances by analysing our own questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interview data collected from dozens of informants in Uzbekistan. Finally, we summarise our major findings with some consideration of recent movements in Central Asian countries with a 'language state of things inseparable from the Russian language' and conclude the paper by offering the outlook for this linguistic institutional arrangement from the viewpoint of institutional complementarity.

Transaction costs and language

One could visualise the functionalities and the economic efficiency of a specific language from an economic and managerial viewpoint when we extend the transaction cost theory proposed by Ronald Coase, a founder of the new institutional economics, then developed by Oliver Williamson and

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[6] An informant from Kazakhstan told us: 'My first language would be a mixture of Kazakh and Russian. I use the two both at home and work and have no feeling Russian is a foreign language… I can't specify which language is my first language' (anonymous, Sapporo, 30 August 2018).

[7] See Rose (2004), Helpman *et al*. (2008), Lohmann (2011), Egger & Lassmann (2012), and Felipe & Kumar (2012) for trade and language; Kelly-Holmes & Mautner (2010), Piekkari *et al.* (2014), and Brannen & Mughan (2017) for language management for international business; and Lamberton (2002), Grin *et al.* (2010), Gazzola & Wickström (2016), and Vigouroux & Mufwene (2020) for language economics.

[8] The modern sense of lingua franca is one of intermediate languages for cross-cultural communication; it could be called 'hegemonic use of language,' in the sense that lingua franca often consists of languages with a greater number of speakers and/or is spoken by individuals who have significant influence in politics, economics, culture, and other areas (Kimura 2009).

Douglass North, and incorporate linguistic factors into the theorem of transaction costs. As stated by North, an economic historian, '[a]n economic definition of transaction costs is the costs of measuring what is being exchanged and enforcing agreements' (North 1997, p. 149). Looking back on the historical process of diminishing transaction costs with a focus on the coordination and cooperation costs among people, North specifies three landmarks in the historical reduction of transaction costs: (1) an appearance of the institutions that made possible impersonal exchange, (2) the assumption of the protection and enforcement of property rights by state authorities, and (3) the realisation of the economic gains from the modern revolution in modern science. In Western Europe, in general, and the Netherlands and England, specifically, some institutional arrangements have developed after a manner, by which the costs, in relation to the mutual interaction of individuals that Coase underlines in his discussion, could be systematically and efficiently reduced; on the other hand, even today, those major transaction cost-reducing innovations still are not embodied in many countries in the developing world (North 1997, pp. 149–160). If we perceive transaction costs in the context described above, it is conceivable that language intrudes into many dimensions of economic life, ranging from individual oral communication to the dispersion of scientific and technological achievements into the hands of private business organisations, in which the informational efficacy and communication functionalities of in-between language are directly linked to the size of transaction costs. However, these arguments remain at the abstract level of reasoning. It should be noted here that written language plays a significant role in creating official and private documents, such as laws and regulations, contracts, and application forms, as well as circulating information among various platforms, from flyers to social media. It is hard to imagine the business world using languages that lack a stable and/or indisputable orthography, irrespective of the number of speakers, or that have a limited number of speakers and hearers, even if they are residents of an affluent society,[9] since this could lead to an increase in various costs associated with market transactions.

Oliver Williamson's approach to transaction costs—Douglass North insisted that the approach developed by Williamson be contrasted with his own approach (1990, pp. 27–28)[10]—places

[9] In Luxemburg, the richest country in the world in terms of GDP per capita, their local language, Luxembourgish, is used exclusively as a spoken language. Although it is stipulated as a state language in the law of language (1984), and there is a clearly defined orthography, it is less likely to be used as a written language in the public sphere. Therefore, an indispensable language for writing within the country is German, which is similar to Luxembourgish in grammar; German is also a common language for accessing German-speaking markets in Europe. Furthermore, French is most widely and frequently used in both the public and private sectors of Luxemburg, and its learning level seems to serve as an indicator of the social status of its constituency (Ogawa 2017). According to an empirical survey, the economic return (earnings increase) to the usage of German or French as a second language is significantly positive in this country (Williams 2011).

[10] At the same time, Williamson also tries to differentiate his argument from that of North by describing: 'The immense difficulties of changing the institutional environment in order to promote economizing outcomes in the aggregate helps explain North's conclusion that "economic history is overwhelmingly a story of economies that failed" [North 1991, p. 98]. By contrast, the transaction cost

great importance on the concept of transaction costs as an analytical tool and develops the microanalytic technique in a more operational way. To utilise the advantages (rationality, systematic thinking, etc.) of the typical economic perspective incorporated into mainstream economics and to instill an operationality and predictivity in the concept of transaction costs so as not to fall into the tautological situation for debate, Williamson suggests that transaction cost economics should follow a general strategy: the transaction is the basic unit of analysis that moves the discussion to a more microanalytic level than is customary in orthodox microeconomics or opens a new horizon for the nanoeconomic reasoning; an empirics of internal organisation theory examines how transaction prices are related to the governance mode and structure or the asset specificities of corporation organisation and in what institutional environment a change in this relationship would be accelerated. According to Williamson, therefore, transaction cost economics, always and everywhere, is an empirical exercise in comparative institutional analysis (Williamson 1997).

Now, what are the transaction costs? Williamson explains that the transaction costs of ex ante and ex post types are usefully distinguished. The first type consists of the costs of drafting, negotiating, and safeguarding an agreement among the parties concerned. The second type refers to the costs of contracting that include the maladaptation costs incurred when transactions drift out of alignment, the haggling costs to correct ex post misalignments, the setup and running costs associated with the dispute-mediation authorities, and the bonding costs of effecting secure commitments (Williamson 1985, pp. 20–22). Reviewing Williamson's discussion, Akashi summarises this in a transpicuous way and brings out four aspects of transaction costs: (1) information collection and analysis costs concerning tradable commodities (market prices, etc.); (2) information collection and analysis costs concerning trade partners (searching, screening, and evaluation costs related to finding a potential client); (3) costs for negotiation and contract procedures with trade partners; (4) monitoring costs for doing business with existing clients or regulation costs in relation to a change of clients (Akashi 1993). When the discussion goes down to this level of concretisation, not only is it understandable that the presence or absence of a common language in market transactions will have a great influence upon the level of transaction costs, but it also leads to an argument that a used language(s) would be an efficient communication tool as one of the advantages inherent in having an internal organisation or a firm with some hierarchies as opposed to the non-hierarchical market structure Williamson suggests in his works. A thesis first proposed by Ronald Coase—i.e. his statement that '… perhaps the most important adaptation to the existence of transaction costs is the emergence of the firm' (Coase 1988, p. 7)—states that a firm makes its appearance as a product of the cost-reduction processes entailed in the above-mentioned market transactions (1) to (4); however, Williamson's discussion suggests that a specific language, irrespective of whether it is natural or

economics story contemplates success' (Williamson 1996, p. 5). See Pessali & Fernández (2012) for Williamson's rhetoric regarding the debate between himself and other economics schools.

symbolic, can summarise complex circumstances and, thus, help to overcome information impactedness that might develop in internal organisations rather than in repetitive market exchanges as a coding measure to remove rationality limits inherent in transaction entities (Williamson 1975, pp. 24, 35–37). Although Williamson's concepts seem to use in-house jargon as well as encode and number final products and assembly parts for the purpose of facilitating communication and efficiency inside the organisation, this same issue is basically applicable to the discussion of natural language. This brings us to contemporary and disputable management questions, such as the introduction and promotion of corporate official language(s) in multinational corporations.

With the background of the prevalence of English in the international business world, or in the words of distinguished French sociolinguist Luis-Jean Calvet (Calvet 2006, pp. 58–80), 'a single hyper-central language' that was born as a result of globalisation, English has been increasingly adopted as a prime corporate official language in profit-making organisations. However, this is not necessarily linked directly to rising management efficiency because the coercive or factual use of English as a common language has multifaceted effects both internally and externally. Following a line of the Coase's thesis, since firms are expected to emerge and develop to internalise transaction costs stemming from business practices to prevent the excessive burden from market transactions, it is now quite natural to consider the necessity of reducing various costs relative to intracompany transactions. This has the goal of smoothing in-house communications in the context of the diversification and internationalisation of business activities. One plausible solution is to standardise the language(s) used and/or adopt a common language policy for efficient corporate management. However, some factors cannot be evaluated or even calculated like normal market transactions, such as ignorance of or the avoidance of using specific languages by those who have limited linguistic abilities and the imposition of some tasks on colleagues who are fluent in these languages (Piekkari 2014, pp. 50–93); the symbolic functionality of common languages that could contribute to a corporate identity and equality among employees (Nekvapil & Sherman 2018); radical changes in the manner and style of in-house communications, etc. (Okamoto 2017). Hence, it is largely impossible to reduce all language-related economic affairs into transaction costs.

Moreover, even though the transaction cost approach appeals to many economic analysts, it cannot be applied correctly to all problems of economic organisation because its fundamental argument—that economic activity and organisations are arranged to minimise transaction costs—has two main problems. First, it is problematic to assume that the total cost of an economic activity can be expressed as the sum of production costs and transaction costs, despite the fact that some prominent researchers, such as Douglass North, develop their argument in this way; in fact, these two types of economic costs generally depend both on the organisation and technology, which makes the conceptual separation between production and transaction costs troublesome. Second, the transaction cost approach relies on a notion of efficiency that is not totally relevant without additional conditions. In other words, efficiency alone may not be a sufficiently strong criterion to produce very specific predictions or clear explanations, as there are typically many different efficient solutions to any resource-allocation problem.[11] To cite an example, as suggested by the reality that multinational companies still struggle to find the most effective way to conduct internal communications (Nekvapil & Sherman 2018), designating English, which is superficially regarded as the most effective common language, as the official corporate language so as to minimise external transaction costs and internal communication costs, is not the only and final solution to the language management issue. In fact, many different linguistic patterns of organisations can be compatible with the efficiency criterion, depending on the language circumstances in each country/region and on the communication customs and practices specific to each business society.

Another key issue to note is that less or no economically rational reasoning will be applicable to the discussion of language in general and of state language especially, which means that a written rule on the designation of public language(s), such as language laws and constitutional obligations for language usage, could lead to powerful restrictions on the development of a business language, including lingua franca. In the context of nation-state building, the symbolic impact of language has acquired a significant political dimension as a result of the inclusion of language in definitions of ethnicity and nation; when the Soviet Union broke apart and new independent states came into existence, nation-state building became an important political goal, with eponymous language as one of its focal points (Schlyter 2001). If we employ the terminology of comparative institutional analysis detailed in the following section, wherein some language rules that should be decided in the polity (political economy) domain give a clear direction as to language use in the trade (economic exchange) domains and other private sector fields, a reverse feedback mechanism could be expected to emerge in some situations (Aoki 2001, pp. 160–179). As long as an establishment of language rule has been decided in the polity domain, it belongs to one of the spheres where state-led activities are deployed; however, its stability and efficiency are variable, depending on the language used by the economic entities who take part in the market transactions, as described later.

Institutions and language

Douglass North considered Masahiko Aoki's comparative institutional analysis to be an essential attempt to frame a systematic theory of new institutional economics beyond the mere descriptive analysis, case observations, and hypothesis formation.[12] Although there are some significant differences between North's and Aoki's conceptualisations of several central notions, such as

[11] For details of this description, see Milgrom & Roberts (1992, pp. 33–35).

[12] In the endorsement of Aoki's monograph noted above, North said, '[i]f the new institutional economics is to realise its promise, it must go beyond the description, insights, and hypotheses so far developed and turn them into a systematic theoretical framework. Masahiko Aoki's *Towards a Comparative Institutional Analysis* takes us a long way in doing just that'.

institutions and organisation, their empirical approaches are grounded in game theory economics. They seem to share a common awareness of the main issues to be discussed: the implications of social institutions for the economic development of the world. In this section, we will borrow from Aoki's concepts and method of thinking that he proposed in the theoretical framework of comparative institutional analysis, and we will attempt to provide greater insight into institutions and language to deepen the relationships among the state languages, the main titular languages, and the lingua franca in the former Soviet Union countries. In doing so, we will refer to the reasoning and the line of thinking of the aforementioned transaction cost economics, which is often considered to be another name for new institutional economics (Menard 2001).[13]

Given the historical fact of the collapse or dissolution of the Soviet Union, it seems appropriate to start our discussion with the help of the subjective game models that Aoki utilises so as to elucidate the mechanism of institutional change over a period of time, as the institutional crises are examined in his own way in these models, and the language use and comprehension in the post-Soviet space are heavily tinged with subjective or cognitive elements. Based on Aoki's ideas, we assume that: first, any perceived institution is an endogenous factor of subjective game models, in the sense that it is acknowledged and personally objectified by individual agents once it is established in society; second, the external social environment around individual agents such as political regimes, economic systems, and technological changes is relatively stable, in the sense it can vary within a limited range. Then, it could be interpreted that a subjective game model concerning language is being reproduced on a personal level, and the situation can be called a general cognitive equilibrium under the next four conditions:[14]

1. The social agent holds only a limited number of language repertoires as a strategic choice from almost infinitely many technologically feasible choices of language.
2. These agents share a system of common beliefs, or an institution Σ^*, about the endogenous rules of language choice by each agent, i.e. the language institution embodied in the contents of language policy and language planning, upon which each strategically chooses a language.
3. Given that the language institution Σ^* is perceived in this fashion, each agent refers to its activated subset of strategy choices, S_i, and private residual information, $I_i(s)$, according to which objective or social consequence $\Phi_i(s_i, I_i(s)\colon \Sigma^*, e)$ of their language choice $s_i \in S_i$ is inferred for all individuals, i, and the exogenous environment, e.
4. The social agent strategically chooses a language repertoire from its activated subset of

[13] Having been a main proponent of transaction costs economics, Oliver Williamson begins with a chapter titled 'Toward a New Institutional Economics' in his representative monograph (Williamson 1975, pp. 5–33).

[14] We hold mathematical expression to a minimum due to space constraints. For the complete argument, see Aoki (2001, pp. 231–244).

strategy choices, S_i, so that, given a language institution, Σ^*, private residual information, $I_i(s)$, and inference regarding the outcomes of the specific language choice, $\Phi_i(s_i, I_i(s)$: $\Sigma^*, e)$ is predicted to maximise its own utility u_i ($\Phi_i(s_i, I_i(s)$: $\Sigma^*, e)$), where $u(.)$ is the payoff predictor.

Since Vladimir Lenin and his successors have officially denied the Russian language as a state language, it was never put in statutory form until the last days of the Soviet Union, a multi-ethnic and multilingual empire of the 20th century. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the strategic decision-making process from 1 to 4 was working to some extent on the premise of the presence of the utility calculation relative to language learning and usage, which enabled the country to maintain a hierarchical bilingual regime with the Russian language superior to others. One of the reasons it was widely accepted in Soviet society as a de facto official language is the state-led public education policy in the polity domain in which those on the supply side of languages attempted to promote the Russian language by thorough language education of non-native learners. Additionally, it should be noted that a sort of cognitive equilibrium of the subjective game models had been attained in the sense previously described by many users on the demand side of languages. In the process, the Soviet-style language institution was formed as a joint production or summary expression of the recognition and awareness of constituent members. Therefore, it had been kept under a general cognitive equilibrium in the sense that this institution was socially reproducible over a period of time. Since no institutional reproductivity is necessary to assume complete correspondence and a strict reproduction of cognitive equilibrium among all memberships, some people expressed scepticism about and sharp disagreement with the Russian-centric language institution among non-Russian residents; however, this linguistic dissident group did not gain sufficient momentum to overturn the conditions of general equilibrium once confirmed. It is well known that these conditions were subject to major changes and severe criticism after the issue of language sovereignty was proposed in various regions in the process of the political crusade for national sovereignty and political independence in each Republic toward the end of the Soviet Union.

All former Soviet Union countries, including Russia, have their own state languages that were legally mandated around the time of independence. In each country, a relationship between the Russian language, a de facto official language previously, and the state language has been fraught with various degrees of tension. Even after some thirty years of independence, linguistic friction remains. It hardly needs to be said that the political relationship with Russia is fundamentally projected in their linguistic issues; on top of this but equally influential is the prominence of the economic operationality of the Russian language among the state languages in the former Soviet Union in terms of the number of speakers, i.e. transaction costs diminished or were expected to do so when the Russian language was treated as a lingua franca (Tokunaga & Suganuma 2019). In brief, many countries encounter a dilemma in that, while they would politically prefer to leave the Russian language, it is not easy economically to do this. If we follow the mechanism of sociolinguist Luis-Jean Calvet's gravitational model of languages introduced in the previous section, those state languages with a limited number of users seem to be inescapably pulled by gravity to the Russian language, which is classified as a super-central language or a second-tier language group of the top ten languages next to English, a hyper-central and the sole first-tier language in the centre of the galaxy of world languages (Calvet 2006, pp. 58–80). To closely examine this discussion that could be intuitively perceived, we apply Aoki's framework of comparative institutional analysis as before, and then we discuss the issue from the perspective of conflict between state-led initiative and economic rationality.

Continuing the earlier discussion, we assume that a general cognitive equilibrium or a general equilibrium where the specific institution is being reproduced in the subjective game models of social agents is thrown off when they start questioning the relevancy and usefulness of their own subjective game models because an existing set of rules does not produce satisfactory results relative to an agent's aspirations. According to Aoki, when such a gap between aspiration and achievement occurs in a critical mass, the situation may be called a general cognitive disequilibrium (Aoki 2001, pp. 239–244). This could happen when there is a drastic environmental change such as war, revolution, the breakup of a nation, etc., along with cumulative dynamic outcomes affecting the objective structure of the game. External shocks alone may be insufficient to trigger institutional change; no less important are internal cumulative impacts whereby the implementability or enforceability of certain rules is starting to become problematic or a substantial number of mutant action choices and associated competences have accumulated internally. Given that this inference is applicable to the linguistic issues in the former Soviet Union countries, the dissolution of the Soviet Union as a huge external shock, as well as latent dissent and cumulative complaints that were unleashed against the language institutions around the time of independence, led to a different institutional arrangement with a new order of ethnic languages—while some gained legitimate status as a state language, others receded into the background, irrespective of the number of current speakers. However, we have seen that some countries have radically changed their language policies a few years after independence and have given legal standing to the Russian language as a state language (Belarus), an official language (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz), or a language for interethnic communication (Tajikistan). In other countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia, etc.), there are continuing calls to give legal status to the Russian language. The process of transitioning to a new language institutional arrangement has entailed a sort of general cognitive disequilibrium along with the development of some social institutions (e.g. language education system) in crisis rather than as a result of following an evolutional pathway to a general equilibrium based on the cognitive equilibrium of the subjective game models regarding the newly established language regime.

Natural language is more or less relevant to all six basic types of domains that Aoki suggests: commons, trade (economic exchange), organisation, social exchange, polity domains, and generic organisational fields (Aoki 2001, pp. 21–27). To facilitate a fruitful discussion, we suppose here that there are only two domains—economic exchange and polity domains—wherein each set of homogenous agents exists separately, and the sets do not directly interact.[15] While a set of agents P (Politicians), who belong to the polity domain G (Government), makes decisions about formal rules of tongues based on the status and rank of state, official, and other languages; a set of agents E (Entrepreneurs), who belong to the economic exchange domain M (Market), establishes private rules of common language usage to minimise the expected transaction costs in their market transactions. Let us assume that all agents in each domain have an identical payoff function, $u_i=u(i \in P)$ or $v_i=v(i \in E)$, defined by binary choice sets of their own, either $\{\Sigma^*, \Sigma^{**}\}$ or $\{\Lambda^*, \Lambda^{**}\}$, with another set of parameters. Here, we define the four sets of language institutions as follows: Σ^* indicates language planning granting legal standing to the Russian language, and Σ^{**} indicates such language planning that does not acknowledge Russian as a state or official language, considering it as just one of many minority or foreign languages; Λ^* indicates a routine linguistic practice in which the Russian language is used as a common language in private business sectors, and Λ^{**} indicates a routine linguistic practice wherein Russian is not included in the choices for a lingua franca. While a state-led selection of the official rules, Σ^* or Σ^{**}, is exclusively conducted in polity domain G, this decision exerts a certain influence over the choice of private rules, Λ^* or Λ^{**}, in the economic exchange domain M. At the same time, we can consider that there is some feedback from the latter to the former, even without direct interaction between the domains; in other words, some changes in the institutional environment in either sphere could impact the other side's institutional settings in an indirect manner. In each domain, G or M, either rule (Σ^* or Σ^{**} / Λ^* or Λ^{**}) is endogenously institutionalised in the sense that it is realised as a result of equilibrium selection by each agent group, P or E.

When institutional complementarity holds true in this model, two types of institutional arrangement with Nash equilibrium[16]—(Σ^*; Λ^*) and (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**})—could come into existence; the former combination would be called 'language planning reliant on the Russian language' and the latter 'language planning independent of the Russian language'. Considering the political circumstances surrounding the independent declaration, it is highly conceivable that the former Soviet Union countries, except for Russia, aimed to achieve the latter institutional settings (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}), in which the agents in each society attempted to more or less stay away from the Russian language in their newly established sovereign state. Here, it is essential to point out that even if this (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) is a Pareto-superior institutional arrangement, in which $u(\Sigma^{**}; \Lambda^{**}) > u(\Sigma^*; \Lambda^*)$ and $v(\Lambda^{**}; \Sigma^{**}) > v(\Lambda^*; \Sigma^*)$, it may

[15] We follow Aoki's line of argument and terminology, by which he attempted to strictly define the formation and implications of institutional complementarity (Aoki 2001, pp. 225–229). As he pointed out there, this simple reasoning—where there can be only one strategic choice for the agents to make in each domain and there are only two domains, each inhabited by homogenous agents—can be extended to more general cases with multiple types of agents in each domain, for example.

[16] See Guala (2016, pp. 20–32) for a description of Nash equilibrium in the context of institutional configurations.

be the case that a Pareto-inferior institutional arrangement emerges under the condition of institutional complementarity because if Σ^* (Λ^*) is chosen in domain *G* (*M*) for some historical reason and this turns to an institutional environment against the other domain, the agents in the latter domain should choose Σ^* or Λ^* in response to this shift as a result of institutional complementarity.[17] Unless endogenously systematised rules in either domain unilaterally determine those in the other domain, the agents of both domains will select the rules in their own space with due consideration of what rules are institutionalised in the other space. If we apply this discussion to the case of language institution, while a set of agents, *P*, belonging to polity domain *G* can make decisions about the statutory position of the specific language or give direction for languages to be learned and taught in the public education system, it seems almost impossible for them to completely control the languages of business, on which a set of agents, *E*, belonging to economic exchange domain *M* relies for market transactions and/or communication within their organisations. A more likely situation is one in which information on the economic efficiency of a particular business language and the decreasing effects of transaction costs due to the usage of a lingua franca is fed back to *P* in domain *G* from *E* in domain *M*, after which the former agents make adjustments to the language policies. In fact, the notions of language policy and language reform are concerned with language practice, or more precisely, with the language users rather than with language itself. Any language policy is dependent on societal support, and this support is more commonly seen in connection with the language attitudes of constituencies (Schlyter 2001). The relationship between language attitudes and language policy or reform is reciprocal rather than hierarchical or unidirectional, since language attitudes not only constitute the prerequisites and the promotive forces of the processes of language policy/reform, but are themselves also affected by and may possibly be altered as a result of these processes (Schlyter 1997). As is suggested in the case of Belarus, where Russian was added to the state language group along with Belarussian in the mid-1990s, and of some Central Asian countries that have politically decided to upgrade Russian to an official language or a language for interethnic communication, the transformation of institutional configurations that seem to avoid (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) or 'language planning independent of the Russian language' would be largely attributable to the historical background of the language's wide usage as a de fact official language for a long period across the Soviet Union. Moreover, as compared with Russian, which has more than 250 million speakers—more than double those of German and Japanese, as well as other major titular languages in the region that have a limited number of users—only the Ukrainian, Uzbek, and Kazakh languages are spoken by more than ten million people.[18] Additionally,

[17] See Note 22 in Aoki (2001, p. 416). However, we cannot assert a prior that an institutional shift from (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) to (Σ^*; Λ^*) in this case shows an example of coordination failure with Pareto superior to interior transition, except when the payoff functions, $u_i=u(i \in P)$ and $v_i=v(i \in E)$, are robustly estimated.

[18] A total of about 32.2 million people, 32.9 million people, and 14.1 million people speak Ukrainian, Uzbek, and Kazakh, respectively, as their mother tongue (WorldData.info, available at https://www.worlddata.info/, accessed 21 October 2021).

some of them seem to lack operationality and stability as a standard language or a written tongue. These circumstances are all closely related to the shift to (Σ^{*}; Λ^{*}) or ‘language planning reliant on the Russian language’.

In this way, state-led initiatives for the formation and development of language institutions are not untouchable at all. Indispensable information on the transaction costs of each ethnic language and Russian as a lingua franca should be transmitted from economic exchange domain M to polity domain G, irrespective of whether this is intended or not, because the agents in both domains of former Soviet countries are more or less involved in diplomatic activities and market transactions with their overseas counterparts in the era of post-Soviet globalisation. Here, the issue to be examined is that an institutional arrangement with a lack of institutional complementarity could be in place when there are no information feedback links among the domains or there are no changes in rules in either domain, even if there is some feedback from the other domain. Suppose that, as for an identical payoff function $v_i=v(i\in E)$ in economic exchange domain M, $v(\Lambda^{**}; \Sigma^{**}) < v(\Lambda^{*}; \Sigma^{*})$ has become evident or has turned around in this way, exclusively for economic reasons; in other words, it turns out that the business community highly evaluates the functionality and economic efficiency of the Russian language as a lingua franca. In this case, if a set of agents, P, in domain G keeps its payoff function $u_i=u(i\in P)$ as $u(\Sigma^{**}; \Lambda^{**}) > u(\Sigma^{*}; \Lambda^{*})$ and tries not to alter the institutional arrangement with a ‘language planning independent of the Russian language’, mainly for political reasons, they should fall into that unpleasant situation without institutional complementarity. We could call this third institutional arrangement (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}) a ‘language state of things inseparable from the Russian language’ in the sense that one does not politically guarantee the legitimate status of the language but could not economically dispel it in their daily lives. In this last category, ‘language state of things’ rather than ‘language planning’ is used because of its poor workability as a part of language policy; ‘inseparable from the Russian language’ conceptually differs from the other two expressions in that the language has been widely, not locally, reproduced in the private sphere with less coherent assistance from public authority. It is apparent that the overall institutional settings in (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}) are neither stable nor robust, since two domains, G and M, are connected without institutional complementarity.

In summary, as for the reality of the Russian language and other major titular languages in the post-Soviet space, we see three types of institutional settings in the successor countries other than Russia: (1) (Σ^{*}; Λ^{*}) as a ‘language planning reliant on the Russian language’; (2) (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) as a ‘language planning independent of the Russian language’; (3) (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}) as a ‘language state of things inseparable from the Russian language’. Note that we could assume in theory the fourth combination (Σ^{*}; Λ^{**}), in which the Russian language is not used as a business language in spite of its solid legal status as a state or official language; however, this seems to lack reality and, thus, we will remove this combination pattern from the following discussion. We argue that Belarus, the only country that has adopted Russian as their state language along with Belarussian, fits the first case (Σ^{*}; Λ^{*}). The second case (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) seems to be most applicable to Georgia and less likely to Estonia and Latvia. These countries are well known for their aversion to the Russian language, which dates back to the Soviet era. This policy has often faced resistance, because native Russian speakers there are expected to acquire each state's language to enjoy full citizenship in their daily lives. Finally, other non-pro-Russian Soviet Union countries seem to face a difficult dilemma that they cannot do without the Russian language in the business sphere, although they expect to do without this if economically possible. This last country group belongs to the third case (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}), where a relationship between their titular language and Russian has been questioned in daily life. Therefore, sometimes there are polarising debates as to how to position the Russian language in everyday domestic life.[19] Such societies that do not work out a stable institutional arrangement of linguistic affairs cannot maintain an institutional connectivity between politics and the economy in good conditions (see Figure 1). In the next section, we will focus on this case and deepen the discussion with a specific example—the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Linguistic development in post-Soviet Uzbekistan: a case study of (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*})

According to Birgit Schlyter, an expert on Turkish linguistics, Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian state to have a language policy at the turn of the 21st century with a strategy for fundamentally changing the language practice in the country. Although there were some delays in the language reform agenda as they faced more urgent problems in other areas of society, an impressive amount of language reform work had been done in Uzbekistan before their 10th anniversary of independence (Schlyter 2001). The same author, however, warned that there is no indication that the Uzbeks always knew what they were doing or what they wanted to do related to their language polices at that time, partially due to the fact that Uzbek language policy has been highly centralised and follows a design that has not yet been able fully to rid itself of outdated Soviet reasoning (Schlyter 1997).[20] Other experts in this field (Alpatov 2000, pp. 166–200; Khruslov 2006; Bashatova 2007; Azimova 2008; Fierman 1995, 2012; Kellner-Heinkele & Landau 2012, pp. 47–78; Asamura 2015, 2018) have agreed that: first, the linguistic development in post-Soviet Uzbekistan has been highly politicised in the sense that the Uzbek language has been substantially changed by top-down bureaucratic procedures and has been strongly influenced by international political affairs; second, new Uzbekistan was the only state in post-Soviet Central Asia that did not designate Russian as an official language or a language of interethnic communication (in its 1992 Constitution or in the 1995 revised Law on Language); third, in spite of this hardship, the Russian language has been widely used both for commercial and official documentation to this day, and demand for Russian education in the country has even increased since

[19] See Khruslov (2006) for some cases of conflict.
[20] A linguist from Uzbekistan also said: 'Language policies laid out more than 80 years ago still influence the way today's language policy is formed in Uzbekistan' (Azimova 2008, p. 185).

Uzbekistan's relations with Russia have improved; finally, and most importantly, overall interest in language reform has decreased after an enthusiastic period of change in the last decade of the 20th century, which makes the implementation of the Uzbek alphabet and vocabulary reforms too slow and unsystematic, frequently ignoring deadlines set by the government. All of these circumstances seem to provide sound evidence that we could categorise the linguistic situation in Uzbekistan as (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}) or 'language state of things inseparable from the Russian language'.

To this point, it has been expected that the usage of the Russian language as a lingua franca should reduce transaction costs in the business sphere in the post-Soviet countries with (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}), let alone (Σ^{*}; Λ^{*}). To make sure of this point, we conducted interviews and questionnaire surveys in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, in February and September 2019. An additional round of surveys was completed in March 2021 so as to increase the number of samples (answers). In Uzbekistan, the de-Russification process of language seems to be on a bumpy road to success. Above all, Russian, not authorised as a state or an official language, still has been used on a regular basis in both official and private sectors, although ethnic Russians have already retreated from the political and business elite that consists chiefly of non-Russian ethnics (Zakhvatov 2000). On top of this, even a decade after the 2010 deadline for transitioning to the new Latin alphabet stipulated in the orthographic rules of Uzbek, the Cyrillic alphabet remains in use today; the share of publications in Latin has not radically increased (Azimova 2008; Asamura 2015, pp. 6–15; Il'khamov 2017), and much of the government and administrative paperwork is still in Cyrillic.

Any business language needs to function as an oral communication tool in the party as well as play a stable role as a written tongue for commercial documentation such as contracts, specifications, and manuals. The Uzbek language seems to have less functionality at this point, because of repeated changes in the orthographic rules since the adoption of the first Uzbek state language law in 1989 (see, for the details, Schlyter 1997, pp. 23–29). A local employee who has been working for a foreign automobile maker stated:[21] 'After our country decided to move from the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin one, we've very often been faced with the difficulty of how to spell words in Latin. So, in fact, we are returning to Cyrillic. And this confusion makes us go ahead toward Russian…. It is true we were encouraged to acquire Uzbek in the early days, but recently many Uzbek speakers demand Russian-medium education'. According to this informant, while they should make public documents submitted to administrative institutions in both Uzbek and Russian, only Russian or dual-language (Russian/English) documentation has been accepted in other business spheres. One reason for these business practices seems to be that many technical terms in accounting, finance, and tax affairs, as well as common forms of business documentation (receipts, etc.), were established in the Russian

[21] Personal communication from a local businessperson whose first language is Uzbek, but who mostly speaks Russian even at home and is fluent in English as well (anonymous, Tashkent, 22 February 2019).

language during the Soviet era. The business people who have cooperated with our hearings in Tashkent report that documentation in English is necessary mainly for contracts, agreements, and memorandums concluded with foreign business partners as well as internal reports submitted to the headquarters of foreign companies. English must be a common workplace language both for oral and written communications if expatriate personnel dispatched from headquarters are not Russian speakers.[22] This fits the case of foreign companies that have developed their business activities in the Russian market; therefore, it is not necessarily a business custom specific to Uzbekistan.

Turning to the public sectors, the Japanese Embassy in Uzbekistan (Tashkent) draws up all diplomatic papers for the Republic of Uzbekistan in Russian, and the official documents that it receives from the Uzbek government are regularly created in Russian; they sporadically see some English correspondence sent from their Uzbek counterparts. According to a Japanese diplomat, it looks as if although Uzbekistan emphasises and expands the usage of Uzbek, their titular language, in cultural and ethnic scenes reminiscent of nationalism, Russian is still prevalent in such pragmatic fields as business and diplomacy. Therefore, in the words of this interviewee, it is indispensable for Uzbek people to master the Russian language to get a 'high-spec' job in Tashkent, irrespective of whether it is in the public or private sector.[23] In fact, teachers from institutions of higher education with humanities departments testify that about 30% of all enrolled students take courses in the area of expertise in Russian. Russian has been used more often in science and technology, and researchers prefer to write their academic articles in this international language in the fields of medical science, engineering, and economics, among others. They go on to say that Russian-medium schools are very popular for pupils in the curriculum of compulsory education, especially in Tashkent, with the prospect that it would help their careers and future work. Although all pupils are obliged to learn Russian in the compulsory education system anywhere in Uzbekistan and have textbooks in both Uzbek and Russian prepared for other school subjects, students from the countryside tend to have lower comprehension in Russian.[24] An expert on Russian education in the country warned that, after Uzbek had become their privileged language, first-year college students with totally different levels of Russian fluency, from quasi-illiteracy to native-speaker level, were being taught within the common educational framework (Bashatova 2007). Probably worrying about these linguistic circumstances, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev was quoted in a speech as saying that it was wrong to think the Russian language was not necessary in Uzbekistan and that every Uzbek was asked to acquire five languages,

[22] Personal communication from Japanese managers and local employees who work for the Uzbek affiliates of Japanese multinational companies (all anonymous, Tashkent, 18–22 February 2019).

[23] Personal communication from a diplomat in the Japanese Embassy in Uzbekistan (anonymous, Tashkent, 11 September 2019). This description is based on his personal views, not those of the Japanese government.

[24] Personal communication from teachers at Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies (all anonymous, Tashkent, September 12, 2019).

including Russian.[25] As for the choice of Uzbek letters, it seems to be left to the judgement of the individual in the world of higher education and science. Plenty of textbooks written in both Latin and Cyrillic are on the shelves in the libraries of colleges specialising in finance and accounting education.[26] Their renovated websites seem to provide undiscriminated access to both alphabet users in Uzbek.[27] An informant from another university indicated that while their incumbent rector allows them to receive Uzbek documents in Latin, the predecessor asked the staff to use Cyrillic for internal documents and to transliterate letters for materials written in Latin.[28]

Most local interviewees agreed that Russian is much more important than English for business in Uzbekistan. Although young people and their parents have demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm for English study in recent years, their main goal has been to get good scores in school and to study abroad, if possible, not necessarily considering future business success, such as a high salary and promotion in the workplace with the help of English fluency. This is mainly because, whereas English is needed only for specific jobs and selected companies in Uzbekistan, Uzbek and Russian are indispensable for work and life, at least in Tashkent or the country's economic centre.[29] It has been also reported that ordinary Uzbek people use these two languages quite differently in their everyday lives: Uzbek for communicating with close companions or as a sign of openness to anyone to talk and Russian for communicating with outsiders in public spaces, even among Uzbek speakers (Nakamura 2018). Turning to a relationship beyond the border, the Russian language is still an effective communication tool among those who have a shared history with the Soviet Union and is indispensable for migrant labourers from Uzbekistan to Russia and other former Soviet Union countries. This fact has enhanced its utility value in the Russian-speaking market or Russosphere, with Russian as its lingua franca. Delving into the Russosphere, the Russian language plays a crucial economic role, one that is irreplaceable, given the various ethnic languages of each country in the region. This promotes the establishment of the Russosphere via a reduction in transaction costs (Tokunaga & Suganuma 2019).

The results of our original questionnaire survey in Tashkent support the view described above.[30] Figures 2 to 4 demonstrate that: first, nine of ten respondents with varying degrees of English

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[25] See Note 24.

[26] From a personal visit to the main library of Tashkent Institute of Finance (Tashkent, 9 September 2019).

[27] See Tashkent Institute of Finance's website portal, available at https://tfi.uz/en, accessed 30 June 2021.

[28] See Note 24.

[29] Personal communication with locally hired staff members working for a Japanese public organisation, teachers at the Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, and a researcher from Tashkent State University of Economics (all anonymous, Tashkent, 18–21 February 2019).

[30] First round of the questionnaire survey was conducted for university students and staff at Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies (TSUOS) and Tashkent Institute of Finance (TFI) in September 2019. In the second round of the March 2021 survey, we collected additional answers, mainly from TSOUS

fluency consider that Russian is still needed for their current life and work; second, as was highly expected, Russian is much more necessary than English within the country; third, Russian is considered to be no less important and promising than English as a foreign language for future success. Subdividing the answers into two groups of questionees, TSUOS and TFI, quantitatively reveals that the latter has a more western-oriented mindset, probably due to the fact that their areas of expertise—finance and accounting—have been strongly influenced by the development of discipline and terminology in the western world (Tables 1 and 2). Furthermore, the same statistical analysis shows that those from Tashkent are more likely to emphasise the future of English for Uzbek young adults (Table 3). Nonetheless, from a big-picture perspective, the results of this questionnaire survey endorse what many local collocutors have mentioned: the Russian language works well enough to be called a lingua franca in Tashkent. Other past and present surveys have reached the same conclusion (Bashatova 2007; Gaybullayevna 2020), which suggests that the Russian landscape has not been altered radically in Uzbekistan during the last few years. Finally, and quite interestingly, some respondents from regions other than Tashkent unexpectedly confessed that they have difficulty writing down their birthplace in the Latin alphabet. It seems that three types of spelling found in their answers—*Jizyakh*, *Jixzax*, and *Djizzak*—stand for the region *Jizzax* in Latin Uzbek (*Жиззах* in Cyrillic Uzben, *Джизак* in Russian, and *Djizzak* in English), where the incumbent president of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, was born. However, the most prevalent Latin spelling used for this region is said to be *Jizzakh*; Investment Promotion Agency under the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan follows this spelling.[31] This episode suggests the difficulty in establishing the new Uzbek orthography in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, which should make ordinary people rely on the heritage of Cyrillic.

Conclusion

In many former Soviet Union countries, including Uzbekistan, that do not guarantee the legal status of the Russian language, it has widely prevailed as a de facto official language in their societies and more clearly displays its own functionality and strength in the field of business because using the language as a lingua franca is highly likely to reduce transaction costs, at least inside the Russian-speaking market or the Russosphere. English lags far behind Russian in this respect, despite all the efforts that some government officials and institutions have made to enhance the English language capability of their constituencies. This phenomenon seems to reflect a sort of path dependency in institutional building as well as how tough it is to change individual language attitudes in the direction

students. There were 122 questionees (78 people from TSUOS and 44 people from TFI), all of whom are more or less fluent in English. The number of respondents seems to be satisfactory for our modest quantitative analysis.

[31] See Investment Promotion Agency’s website portal, available at https://invest.gov.uz/, accessed 31 August 2021.

preferred in government language polices and/or planning. At the same time, the Belarusian transition to (Σ^{*}; Λ^{*}) or 'language planning reliant on the Russian language' both in name and in reality is unlikely to be politically acceptable; thus, (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}) could continue to work as a 'language state of things inseparable from the Russian language', in spite of a lack of robustness of institutional complementarity between the polity and economic exchange domains.

However, outside the Russosphere, because Russian has become the common business language in place of English, the global-standard business language, non-Russian speakers face the likelihood of additional overhead, in the form of higher transaction costs (Tokunaga & Suganuma 2019).[32] It seems reasonable, therefore, that even seemingly pro-Russian countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz, and Tajikistan have struggled to move to (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) or 'language planning independent of the Russian language', as it works well to some extent in Georgia and the Baltic states that have been incorporated into the business cultures in the western world.[33] In fact, some local sources suggested that an attempt was made to put English ahead of Russian as the second official language of Turkmenistan in the early 1990s; similar rumours circulated in Kyrgyz (Schlyter 2001). After more than a decade of debate, Kazakhstan made a final decision to change the Kazakh alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin in October 2017,[34] following Azerbaijan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This movement is parallel with trilingual education reform in the country: Kazakh as the state language, Russian as the language of interethnic communication, and English as the language of integration into the global economy (Karabassova 2020, 2021). When the new language law was introduced in Tajikistan in October 2009,[35] the special status previously enjoyed by Russian was omitted from the law, and the language is no longer acknowledged as a language for interethnic communication. Afterward, the Tajik authorities continued to try to boost the state language (Tajik) and degrade Russian by banning the Russian version of Father Christmas (Santa Claus) and non-Tajik names for babies; since the mid-2010s, journalists face fines for violating the official language rules and norms.[36] Finally, Uzbekistan, our main target country, is trying to take a further step toward (Σ^{**};

[32] See Tokunaga & Suganuma (2020) for language challenges in the Russosphere from the viewpoint of Japanese business people.

[33] It seems that Azerbaijan is gradually following this path (see Figure 1). According to staff members working for the Japan Association for Trade with Russia & NIS, among NIS (CIS) member states, only Azerbaijan prefers to use the local language, Azerbaijani, and English for business conferences and seminars organised by this business council specialising in support and matching between Japanese companies and their counterparts in the post-Soviet region. Personal communication from the staff at the Japan Association for Trade with Russia & NIS (all anonymous, Tokyo, 6 and 10 August 2018)

[34] Ukaz Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 26 oktyabrya 2017 goda No. 569, available at: https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33613600, accessed 2 July 2021. The new Latin letters are revised later and defined in Ukaz Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 19 fevralya 2018 goda No. 637, available at: https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U1800000637, accessed 2 July 2021.

[35] Zakon Respubliki Tadzhikistan ot 5 oktyabrya 2009 goda No. 553, available at: https://www.andoz.tj/docs/zakoni/l_%E2%84%9613_state-language-RT_ru.pdf, accessed 2 July 2021.

[36] 'Journalists in Tajikistan to Face Fines for Using "Incomprehensible" Words', *The Guardians*, 1

Λ^{**}): two presidential decrees were proclaimed in 2019 and 2020 for upgrading the role and authority of their titular language and developing the language policies in Uzbekistan, respectively.[37] The Uzbek government unveiled a plan to issue a certificate for Uzbek fluency, which high-ranking officials are asked to take starting in 2023;[38] they will also be compelled to show capability in a foreign language in the near future—probably English, among others.[39] All things considered, not only anti-Russian countries with (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}), but also pro-Russian countries closed to (Σ^{*}; Λ^{*}), are heading for (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) through encouraging each state language in the public sphere.[40]

Turning to overseas markets outside the Russosphere, the continuous usage of Russian as a business language leads to an increase in transaction costs; therefore, (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) or 'language planning independent of the Russian language' seems economically rational and politically suitable as an ultimate combination of linguistic institutional settings. However, even if it will be finally realised in the future, fulfilling this goal has a long way to go, right now, and the transition process toward (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) would span a long period of time, swaying back and forth in the political wind and/or with economic turbulence to come. With our present knowledge of the terminology of comparative institutional analysis discussed in this paper, the long and bumpy road to (Σ^{**}; Λ^{**}) could not be a linear evolutionary pathway to a general cognitive equilibrium based on the cognitive equilibrium of the subjective game models regarding the newly established language regime; instead, (Σ^{**}; Λ^{*}) or 'the language state of things inseparable from the Russian language' is highly likely to long endure with a continuous cognitive disequilibrium and latent institutional crises in the foreseeable future. This is apparently reflected in an endless dispute regarding the position of the Russian language and the choice of alphabet in some post-Soviet countries.[41]

Figure 1 Linguistic institutional settings and complementarity in the post-Soviet space

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August 2016, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/01/tajikistan-fining-journalists-incomprehensible-words, accessed 2 July 2021.

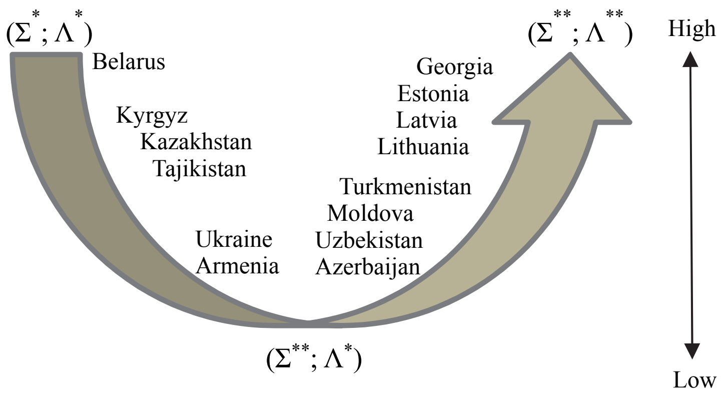
[37] Ukaz Prezidenta Respubliki Uzbekistan ot 21 oktyabrya 2019 goda No. UP-5850, available at: https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4561747, accessed 2 July 2021 and Ukaz Prezidenta Respubliki Uzbekistan ot 20 oktyabrya 2020 goda No. UP-6084, available at: https://lex.uz/docs/5058375, accessed 26 June 2021.

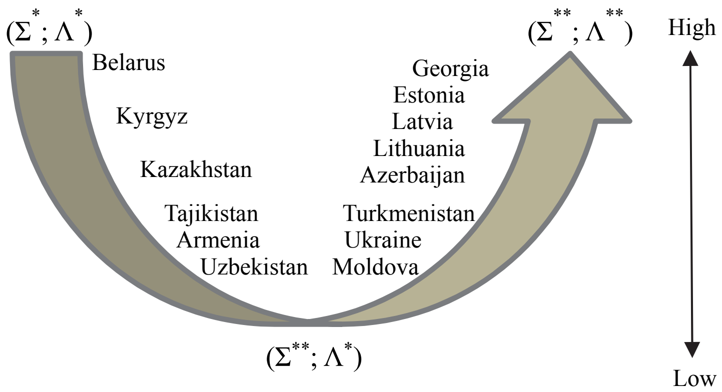
[38] 'S 2023 goda rukovoditeli budut obyazany imet' sertifikat o znanii gosyazyka — proekt', Gazeta.uz, 15 November 2020, available at: https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/11/15/state-language/, accessed 26 June 2021.

[39] 'Znanie inostrannogo yazyka sdelayut obyazatel'nym pri prieme na rabotu v gosuchrezhdeniya', Gazeta.uz, 6 May 2021, available at: https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2021/05/06/language/, accessed 26 June 2021.

[40] As for the background of the titular language encouragement in Kyrgyz that could be considered to be closed to (Σ^{*}; Λ^{*}) following Belarus (see Figure 1), see Huskey (1993), Derbisheva (2009), and Odagiri (2012, 2015).

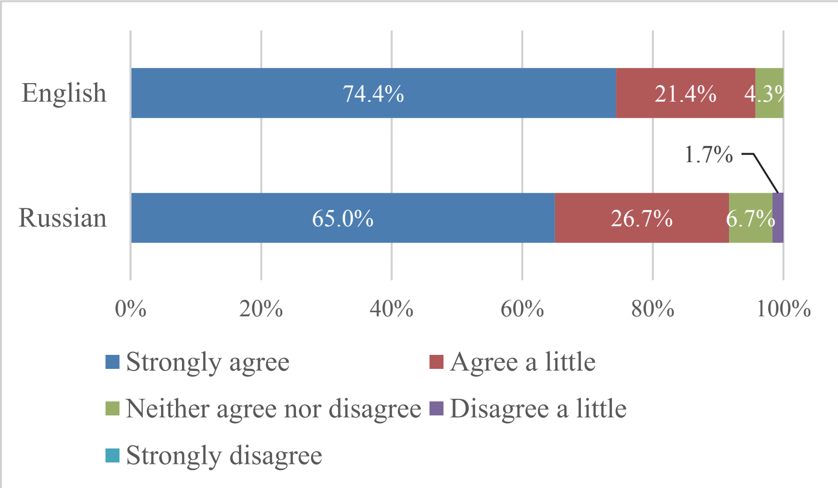
[41] In Uzbekistan, a renowned littérateur, Shukhrat Rizaev, proposed to return the Uzbek alphabet from Latin to Cyrillic in a public letter to the president of Uzbekistan, rekindling a long-running controversy over the choice of alphabet in the country. See Il'khamov (2017) for the background of the dispute that has been polarising public opinion.





Note: The upper and lower figures show the linguistic circumstances in the late 1990s and in the late 2010s, respectively. High/low denotes the degree of institutional complementarity between Σ and Λ.
Source: Authors' own figure

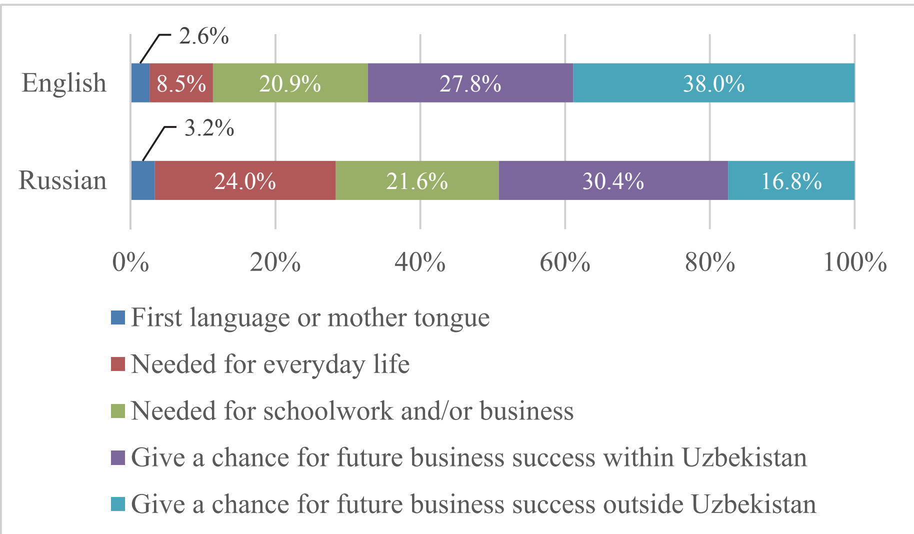
Figure 2 Subjective evaluation of the functionality of English and Russian in Uzbekistan



Note: Aggregation of answers to two questions: ‘Is the Russian language still needed to do your work (school and/or business life) successfully?’ and ‘Is English needed to do your work (school and/or business life) successfully?’

Source: Compiled using the questionnaire survey data

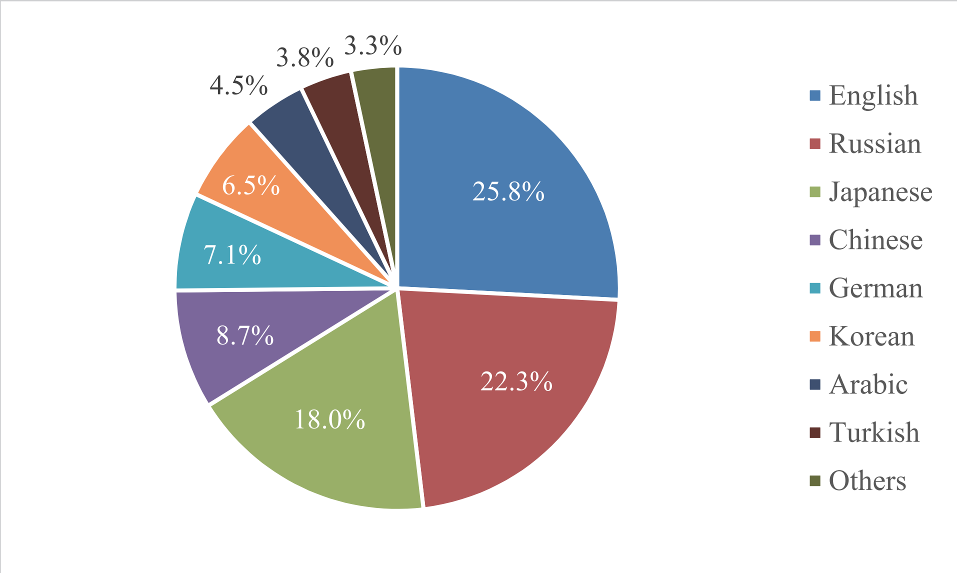
Figure 3 Motivation to use or study English and Russian



Note: Aggregation of answers to two questions: ‘What is your motivation to use or study the Russian language?’ (multiple answers allowed), and ‘What is your motivation to use or study English?’ (multiple answers allowed)

Source: Compiled using the questionnaire survey data

Figure 4 Subjective evaluation of foreign language for prospective future success



Note: Aggregation of answers to the question: 'What foreign languages look most promising for your future success?' (multiple answers allowed)

Source: Compiled using the questionnaire survey data

Table 1 Subjective evaluation of the functionality of English and Russian by respondent groups

	English			Russian		
	TSUOS	TFI	Subtotal	TSUOS	TFI	Subtotal
Strongly agree	57	30	87	51	27	78
Agree a little	12	13	25	16	16	32
Neither agree nor disagree	4	1	5	8	0	8
Disagree a little	0	0	0	2	0	2
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	73	44	117	77	43	120

Note: All figures denote the number of corresponding answers. See the note in Figure 2 for the question text. Chi-square test for independence gives $\chi^2 = 3.230$ ($p = 0.199$) for English (three items from above) and $\chi^2 = 8.428$ ($p = 0.038$) for Russian (four items from above).

Source: Calculated using the questionnaire survey data

Table 2 Subjective evaluation of foreign language for prospective future success by respondent groups

	TSUOS	TFI	Subtotal
Russian	60	40	100
English	72	44	116
German	9	23	32
French	3	6	9
Italian	3	0	3
Chinese	24	15	39
Korean	20	9	29
Japanese	64	17	81
Arabic	15	5	20
Persian	0	0	0
Turkish	9	8	17
Total	279	167	446

Note: All figures denote the number of corresponding answers. See the note in Figure 4 for the question text. Chi-square test for independence gives $\chi^2 = 33.447$ ($p = 0.000$) for all items other than Persian. When German and Japanese are further removed from the samples, the test gives $\chi^2 = 5.950$ ($p = 0.546$) for all other items, which means no quantitative difference in the answers of the two respondent groups.

Source: Calculated using the questionnaire survey data

Table 3 Subjective evaluation of the functionality of English by birthplace

	Tashkent	Others	Subtotal
Strongly agree	46	39	85
Agree a little	6	18	24
Neither agree nor disagree	1	3	4
Total	53	60	113

Note: All figures denote the number of corresponding answers. Chi-square test for independence gives $\chi^2 = 7.170$ ($p = 0.028$).

Source: Calculated using the questionnaire survey data

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