

IRSTI 14.35.07

UDC 37.014.5

<https://doi.org/10.52269/SRDG2612080>

RETHINKING TEACHER LEADERSHIP: A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL STUDY

Zhumay N.* – PhD, acting Associate Professor of the Department of theory and practice of translation, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.

Dzhabasheva B.M. – Master, Senior Lecturer of the Department of theory and practice of translation, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.

Maracz K.L. – PhD, Professor of the University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

This study investigates the emerging yet constrained nature of teacher leadership at the Philology Faculty of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (ENU) in Astana. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data analyses to elucidate the perceptions and trends among university educators regarding their leadership capabilities. The study defines the teacher leadership and elucidates its relationship with other leadership modalities, examining its advantages and disadvantages within the educational context. The findings reveal that teacher leadership significantly enhances student-learning outcomes by fostering continuous opportunities for academic and professional growth. However, the visibility of leadership practices among faculty remains limited. The research underscores the critical necessity for collaboration, the strengthening of professional relationships, and the cultivation of joint decision-making skills to develop robust teacher leadership qualities. By fostering a culture of mutual support and cooperation among educators, the study concludes that increased confidence and teaching effectiveness can be achieved, ultimately leading to improved educational quality and student performance. The evidence presented in this article contributes to the existing scope of knowledge on teacher leadership and its implications for enhancing educational practices in higher education settings. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining theoretical analysis with empirical data collected through surveys and interviews with university faculty in Kazakhstan.

Key words: teacher leadership, students' results, teaching, professional growth, continuous progress.

ОҚЫТУШЫЛАРДЫҢ КӨШБАСШЫЛЫҒЫН ҚАЙТА ҚАРАУ: ТЕОРИЯЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ЭМПИРИКАЛЫҚ ЗЕРТТЕУ

Жұмай Н.* – PhD, Аударма теориясы мен практикасы кафедрасы доцентінің м.а., Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия Ұлттық Университеті, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы.

Джабашева Б.М. – магистр, Аударма теориясы мен практикасы кафедрасының аға оқытушысы, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы.

Мараш К.Л. – PhD, Амстердам университетінің профессоры, Амстердам, Нидерланды.

Бұл зерттеу Астана қаласындағы Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің филология факультетінде оқытушылардың көшбасшылығының жаңа, бірақ әлі толық қарастырылмаған шектеулі сипатын қарастырады. Аралас тәсілді қолдана отырып, зерттеу университет оқытушыларының көшбасшылық қабілеттеріне қатысты қабылдауы мен тенденцияларын нақтылау үшін сапалық және сандық деректерді талдауды қамтиды. Зерттеу оқытушылардың көшбасшылығының анықтамасын тұжырымдайды және оның білім беру контекстіндегі артықшылықтары мен кемшіліктерін ескере отырып, көшбасшылықтың басқа түрлерімен байланысын нақтылайды. Нәтижелер оқытушылардың көшбасшылығы студенттердің оқу нәтижелерін айтарлықтай жақсартып, академиялық және кәсіби өсу үшін тұрақты мүмкіндіктер жасайтынын көрсетеді. Дегенмен, оқытушылар арасында көшбасшылық тәжірибелердің көрінуі шектеулі болып қала береді. Зерттеу ынтымақтастықтың, кәсіби қарым-қатынастарды нығайтудың және оқытушылардың күшті көшбасшылық қасиеттерін қалыптастыру үшін бірлесіп шешім қабылдау дағдыларын дамытудың маңызды қажеттілігін көрсетеді. Зерттеу педагогтар арасында өзара қолдау және ынтымақтастық мәдениетін қалыптастыру арқылы оқытудың сенімділігі мен тиімділігін арттыруға қол жеткізуге болатынын, сайып келгенде білім сапасы мен студенттердің үлгерімін жақсартуға әкеледі деген қорытындыға келеді. Осы мақалада келтірілген мәліметтер оқытушылардың көшбасшылығы және оның жоғары оқу орындарындағы білім беру тәжірибесін жақсартуға әсері мен білімнің көлеміне ықпалы туралы сөз қозғайды. Бұл зерттеуде теориялық талдауды Қазақстан университеттерінің оқытушыларымен жүргізілген сауалнамалар мен сұхбаттар барысында жиналған эмпирикалық деректермен біріктірілетін аралас әдіс қолданылады.

Түйінді сөздер: оқытушылардың көшбасшылығы, студенттердің нәтижелер, оқыту, кәсіби өсу, тұрақты даму.

ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛЕНИЕ ЛИДЕРСТВА УЧИТЕЛЕЙ: ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКОЕ И ЭМПИРИЧЕСКОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ

Жумай Н. – PhD, и.о. доцента кафедры теории и практики перевода, Евразийский национальный университет имени Л. Н. Гумилева, г. Астана, Республика Казахстан.*

Джабашева Б.М. – магистр, старший преподаватель кафедры теории и практики перевода, Евразийский национальный университет им. Л.Н. Гумилева, г. Астана, Республика Казахстан.

Мараш К.Л. – PhD, профессор Амстердамского университета, г. Амстердам, Нидерланды.

В данном исследовании рассматривается зарождающаяся, но ограниченная, природа лидерства преподавателей на филологическом факультете Евразийского национального университета им. Л.Н. Гумилева (ЕНУ) в Астане. В исследовании использован смешанный подход, включающий как качественный, так и количественный анализ данных, проясняющий восприятие и тенденции среди преподавателей университета в отношении их лидерских способностей. Исследование формулирует определение лидерства преподавателей и проясняет его связь с другими формами лидерства, рассматривая его преимущества и недостатки в контексте образования. Результаты показывают, что лидерство преподавателей значительно улучшает результаты обучения студентов, создавая постоянные возможности для академического и профессионального роста. Однако видимость лидерских практик среди преподавателей остается ограниченной. Исследование подчеркивает критическую необходимость сотрудничества, укрепления профессиональных отношений и развития навыков совместного принятия решений для формирования сильных лидерских качеств преподавателей. Исследование приходит к выводу, что путем формирования культуры взаимной поддержки и сотрудничества среди педагогов можно достичь повышения уверенности и эффективности преподавания, что в конечном итоге приведет к улучшению качества образования и успеваемости студентов. Данные, представленные в этой статье, внесут вклад в существующий объем знаний о лидерстве преподавателей и его влиянии на улучшение образовательных практик в высших учебных заведениях. В этом исследовании используется смешанный метод, сочетающий теоретический анализ с эмпирическими данными, собранными в ходе опросов и интервью с преподавателями университетов Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: лидерство преподавателей, результаты студентов, преподавание, профессиональный рост, постоянный прогресс.

Introduction. It is generally accepted that leadership holds significant value in the development of educational institutions. According to Paul Arianto et al., effective leadership depends not only on technical and managerial competencies but also on the moral qualities of the leader [1]. The greatest obstacles to the integration of technology have been teachers' beliefs and attitudes, as well as their level of knowledge and skills [2].

Day, Gu, and Sammons argue that due to the complexity and continuous evolution of the school environment [3, p. 221], school leadership has shown great interest in international education, as it has become increasingly evident that it plays a key role in improving student achievement. The effectiveness of a school principal's leadership can be maximized in various ways, one of which is a systematic and sustainable approach to the selection of school/madrasah principals [4].

Purposeful leadership drives school or University change and can be identified as a fundamental element in ensuring study improvement. One of the most effective types of leadership in enhancing education is teacher leadership, which has gained widespread recognition over the past two decades [5]. The significance of teacher leadership lies in improving the quality of education and teaching, which, in turn, influences students' motivation and academic performance [6, p. 2556].

Cruikshank examines the advantages of instructional and transformational leadership styles in facilitating student outcomes [7, p. 115]. James, Elaine, and Haigen compare pathways from principal leadership through school organizational processes to student outcomes, including the mediating effect of teachers, with pathways that exclude teacher influence in their research [8]. They also note that a country's economy depends on the quality of education and highly qualified teachers, where teacher leadership can play a crucial role. This can be explained by the fact that, in the era of globalization, education is absolutely essential in all spheres of life. Success in high-demand professions such as law, economics, and medicine stems from education; therefore, education plays a significant role in a country's growth.

According to Jennifer W., the term 'socialized leadership' means that the responsibilities of a leader are always social in nature [9]. As for teachers, they are the direct facilitators of education, and their professional development, involvement in decision-making, and willingness to take initiative in innovation and research will be of great importance. Teacher leadership encompasses all these and many other functions of teacher leaders, which will be further discussed in this article. Teacher leadership is predominantly observed in Western countries, particularly in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. However, it is less known in Eastern countries, particularly in Kazakhstan. Therefore, this study will focus on examining the characteristics of teacher leadership and its impact on student achievement in Kazakhstan.

This research paper presents the findings of a case study conducted in Kazakhstan, where teacher leadership is found to be emerging but constrained by institutional and structural factors. Specifically, the case study was conducted at the Philology faculty of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (ENU) located in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. It is a state university with 22,118 undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students, also including foreign students (based on 2023 statistics). The ENU is named after an outstanding thinker and Turkic scholar L.N. Gumilyov. The academic structure of the ENU consists of 12 faculties specializing in various fields, including humanities and physical sciences. The department chosen for the study belongs to the Faculty of Philology.

Research aim

The primary objective of this assignment is to assess teachers' leadership abilities in enhancing the quality of student learning. This essay will explore the nature of pedagogical leadership and its relationship with other forms of leadership. It will then analyze the advantages and challenges associated with teacher leadership. Finally, the paper will examine the impact of teacher leadership on students' academic performance.

This article is structured around four key research questions:

1. How does teacher leadership contribute to improving student achievement?
2. What are the potential benefits and challenges of teacher leadership?
3. In what ways do teacher leaders influence students' academic performance?
4. How does teacher leadership impact student attendance and engagement in learning?

Materials and Methods. A case study approach was employed as the research methodology to investigate a specific higher education department within a particular academic institution. Cohen et.al define a case study as a distinct instance that serves to elucidate broader concepts [10, p. 176]. According to Wisker, this research method allows for an in-depth examination of an individual, organization, or specific situation [11, p. 191]. The selection of a case study for this research was based on two key considerations. Firstly, it facilitates a thorough exploration of the subject matter, although its generalizability is limited unless corroborated by other studies. Secondly, a case study yields practical insights that can be directly applied to various contexts, ranging from staff development initiatives to educational policy formulation [10, p. 177].

Within the case study framework, qualitative research methods were employed, with a particular emphasis on interviews. Bagley characterizes an interview as “an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest [12],” highlighting the centrality of human interaction in knowledge production and the socially constructed nature of research data. However, a potential limitation arises from the assumption of mutual interest, as interviewees may not always share the same level of engagement as the interviewer. One of the primary advantages of interviews is their capacity to yield rich, detailed insights from respondents on a specific subject [11, p. 193]. Nevertheless, certain challenges are associated with this method, including potential biases in respondents' statements and the risk of misrepresentation or misinterpretation by the researcher [13, p. 208]. Open-ended interview questions were utilized to allow participants to articulate their responses in their own words and provide comprehensive insights. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to facilitate a nuanced understanding of participants' perspectives (See Fig.1). The interview questions, developed by the researcher, focused on teacher leadership in enhancing student outcomes. Given that existing empirical studies on teacher leadership predominantly address decision-making and conceptual perceptions of the role, these questions were designed to bridge the gap by specifically examining the relationship between teacher leadership and student achievement.

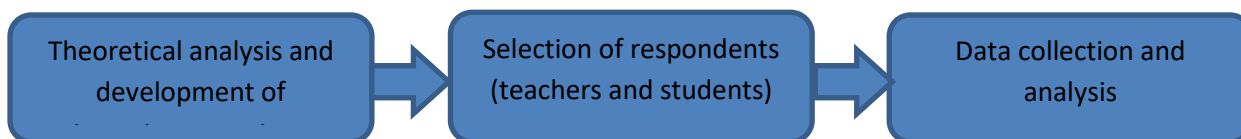


Fig 1. A structured multi-stage procedure

Fig. 1 depicts the structured multi-stage procedure employed in this article. At the first stage, a theoretical analysis of existing works on teacher leadership was conducted. At the second stage, respondents (teachers and students) were selected using purposive sampling. The third stage involved data collection and analysis. Data were collected through questionnaire conducted face-to-face and in 4 cases via emails. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis and themes related to teacher leadership practices and their perceived impact on students.

The questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on a critical review of theoretical and empirical studies on teacher leadership. The questionnaire included thematic blocks covering followings:

1. perceptions of teacher leadership
2. manifestations of leadership in teaching and collegial interaction
3. the perceived impact of such leadership on students' academic development.

As noted in the introduction, the study was conducted within the Philology faculty of the ENU. A total of five faculty members and four students participated in the interviews, enabling respondent triangulation and ensuring diverse perspectives. Faculty participants were English language instructors with a minimum of

ten years of teaching experience. To facilitate unrestricted expression, all faculty members opted to respond in their native language. Additionally, the researcher's status as an insider in the faculty facilitated access and rapport with participants. It is noteworthy that all participating faculty members were female, as the chosen department did not include any male instructors at the time of the study.

Regarding student participants, final-year undergraduate students were selected due to their extensive interaction with faculty members. The sample comprised two students from the Kazakh-language group and two from the Russian-language group. Kazakh and Russian are equally integral alongside English, which is used exclusively for certain theoretical courses such as stylistics and English literature. The inclusion of students from both linguistic backgrounds allowed for comparative analysis of their responses.

Prior to the interviews, logistical arrangements were made, including contacting participants via email and telephone. The researcher's familiarity with both faculty and students facilitated the recruitment process, ensuring that no significant challenges arose in obtaining consent. All interviews were conducted face-to-face on an individual basis, except for one student who participated via email due to scheduling constraints. The interviews, which took place at the university between January 9th and 11th, lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. While faculty members often took time to deliberate before responding, students tended to provide more concise and prompt answers.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, scope, and confidentiality measures. Adherence to ethical principles ensured that participants provided informed consent and that their privacy was maintained throughout the study.

Results. Teachers' Perception of Teacher Leadership

Teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership varied within the department, but most perspectives emphasized leadership as an individual trait. Many participants identified teacher leaders as individuals with distinct personal qualities such as charisma, creativity, or a sense of responsibility, which set them apart from their colleagues.

Additionally, some teachers viewed leadership as the ability to effectively organize one's work with students. Specifically, one teacher emphasized that teachers should excel in classroom management and foster student independence. She argued that educators should move beyond traditional, teacher-centered instructional methods and instead promote critical thinking, encouraging students to form their own opinions.

Another perspective on teacher leadership described teachers as those deeply committed to their work, often taking on additional responsibilities such as participating in conferences or serving as senior tutors. This view also suggested that leadership qualities could diminish over time, with some teachers, after many years of service, transitioning from leaders to regular educators.

Potential Advantages and Disadvantages of Teacher Leadership

Teachers within the department recognized several advantages associated with teacher leadership. First and foremost, the benefits of collaboration were emphasized. Most teachers agreed that interaction among colleagues is crucial for sharing experiences, ideas, and addressing challenges related to teaching and learning. As one teacher noted: "When you work in isolation, you may not know if you are on the right track, but sharing ideas with others opens up a range of new possibilities, offering more choices and effective strategies."

Another teacher highlighted the positive impact of teacher leadership on students. She noted that when students perform well in some subjects but struggle in others, it is essential for teachers to collaborate to identify the underlying issues and devise solutions. Furthermore, when all educators work toward a common goal of enhancing student development, it can lead to overall improvements in student achievement and, ultimately, the university's success.

A third advantage mentioned was the creation of a positive workplace atmosphere where equality and mutual support are prioritized. One teacher explained that fostering morale and trust among teachers is essential, as it can significantly influence student outcomes. She shared an example of how negative attitudes among teachers could affect their students, potentially leading to poor academic performance or interpersonal conflicts within the classroom.

However, alongside these benefits, several potential disadvantages were also identified by the teachers. One significant concern was the reluctance of some teachers to take on additional risks and responsibilities. As one interviewee pointed out, when tasks are distributed among colleagues and a teacher fails to fulfill their responsibilities, the burden is often placed on others, leading to an imbalance in workload. Consequently, the teacher who takes on more tasks might experience undue pressure and frustration.

Another challenge mentioned was the issue of egalitarianism, which could be misunderstood. One teacher explained that when a colleague introduces a new idea, other teachers may perceive it as an attempt to differentiate oneself or seek additional recognition, which could result in additional workload and effort. This interpretation may be influenced by the individual psychology or institutional culture.

In summary, the data gathered from the interviews suggest that there are more obstacles to the development of teacher leadership at the Kazakhstani University than advantages. The factors contributing to these challenges are illustrated in the diagram below (diagram 1):

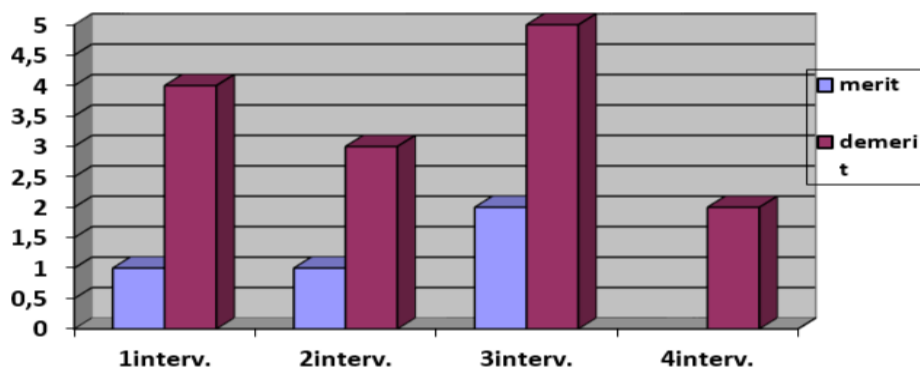


Diagram 1. The contributing factors from the interview

Teachers' Impact on Students' Outcomes

As the Philology faculty places a strong emphasis on English language instruction, teachers' responses regarding their impact on student attendance, participation, and achievement were framed within the context of teaching English as a foreign language. The approaches to enhancing student engagement and performance varied among the interviewees.

Two of the interviewees shared a similar approach to improving student outcomes. They both emphasized the importance of adopting an individualized approach for each student, focusing on motivation and boosting students' confidence. They stated that they aim to raise students' self-esteem in front of their peers and engage in one-on-one discussions to address concerns. They underscored that publicly reprimanding or criticizing a student can negatively affect their future participation. Furthermore, they suggested that addressing issues such as poor attendance and underperformance can often be remedied through a simple conversation. By identifying gaps in students' knowledge and discussing these issues with them, they offer personalized advice on how to overcome these challenges.

Another two interviewees focused on increasing students' interest in the subject by supplementing their primary textbook with diverse teaching materials. They noted that students demonstrated a better understanding when teachers incorporated examples from their own life experiences while explaining topics. One interviewee shared that her participation in conferences as an interpreter allowed her to apply her theoretical knowledge in practice, which she then shared with students during lessons on linguistic studies.

One interviewee specifically emphasized the role of control in enhancing students' academic achievement. While others agreed that control is important, they did not consider it the most critical factor. In contrast, this interviewee argued that students are motivated by the grades they receive. She explained that frequently reminding students of how their attendance and participation directly impact their final grades keeps them alert and engaged. She also stated that regular assessments, such as tests, coursework, and presentations, strongly motivate students and have a significant impact on their performance.

These findings align with the results from Lenchuk's study [14, p. 9], which concluded that the most accurate results in educational research are often obtained when case studies are conducted within a single school or class.

Students' Perspectives

From the students' perspective, two key factors strongly influenced their attendance and participation. The first factor is control. Students noted that when their marks are contingent on their attendance, they are less likely to miss class. For example, one student from the Kazakh group shared that after missing a lesson and having 10% deducted from her total mark, she never skipped class again. The second factor is the level of interest in the lesson. Students explained that when lessons are engaging, they are more likely to attend and participate actively. Additionally, a student from the Russian group pointed out that the attitude of teachers towards students plays a significant role. She commented: "Some students are considered 'outsiders' by certain teachers, and no matter how hard you try, your grade will always be low. They often point out your weaknesses in front of the whole class, which makes you give up and stop engaging in their lessons."

Regarding academic achievement, students reported that a variety of materials and additional tasks related to translation expanded their knowledge. They noted that many teachers rely too heavily on a single textbook, which diminishes their interest in the lesson. While some teachers did provide extra tasks, students observed that these were often not adequately checked, leading to gaps in their learning. Moreover, a student from the Russian group mentioned that error correction was especially beneficial. He stated: "Some teachers make us analyze our mistakes (e.g., during translation or interpreting). These activities help us avoid making the same mistakes in the future and improve our language and professional skills."

In conclusion, it can be suggested that students primarily benefit from teacher leadership, as it enables teachers to continually improve their teaching practices.

Furthermore, it can be argued that when teachers engage in professional development, they simultaneously enhance their students' learning. Teachers and students are deeply interconnected and

motivate one another. Teachers derive satisfaction from witnessing the positive outcomes of their students' achievements, which are the result of their own efforts. On the other hand, students are encouraged by their teachers' high level of expertise and the positive classroom atmosphere created by the teachers.

However, teacher leadership does not appear to be fully evident within the department where this case study was conducted. This is reflected in the varied perceptions of teacher leadership among the faculty. In this context, leadership is often viewed from an individualistic perspective, rather than as a collective or collaborative effort. Teacher leadership is primarily seen in formal terms, with activities such as attending colleagues' demonstration lessons and celebrating events like New Year and other holidays. Overall, there is limited active collaboration among teachers regarding their teaching practices. This lack of collaboration can be attributed to the clear delineation of tasks and the additional bureaucratic responsibilities that teachers are required to manage. Furthermore, teachers in this department report heavy teaching loads, with each educator responsible for fifteen hours of teaching per week.

Regarding their impact on student outcomes, it was found that students' engagement in lessons tends to be low. This is largely due to the formal teaching style and the lack of opportunities for students to engage in independent work. Nevertheless, students' attendance and participation in lessons are relatively high. According to students, this is largely motivated by the potential impact of attendance on their grades, with poor attendance resulting in a deduction of marks.

We believe that leadership is also very important for project organizations to retain potential employees, but this cannot be achieved unless project HR professionals improve the competencies of their employees and strengthen their commitment to their careers [15].

Discussion. *The Definition of Teacher Leadership and Its Relationship with Other Leadership Models*

An initial review of the extensive literature on leadership reveals that the concept of teacher leadership has evolved over time, with scholars identifying three distinct stages in its development (Pounder, 2006). Also the contemporary research has focused on teacher leadership, leading professional learning among peers by outstanding researchers of the teachers' leadership Abrahamsen and Helstad [16], Harris and Jones [17], Harris et.al., [18]. In its earliest phase, teacher leadership was confined within formal managerial structures, where department heads were considered the primary teacher leaders. The second phase expanded the scope of teacher leadership to instructional responsibilities, yet it remained limited to formal roles such as subject leaders, team leaders, and curriculum developers. The third and most recent stage reflects the contemporary understanding of teacher leadership, where teachers are increasingly empowered to take on leadership roles beyond traditional formal structures.

Mentors and coaches serve as social-emotional facilitators to support learning needs, co-teach, co-plan, help manage challenging behaviour, support group interaction and support the teachers to whom they are assigned [19].

The definition of teacher leadership is widely regarded as complex and multidimensional. One key aspect of this complexity lies in the distinction between formal and informal teacher leadership. Emira classifies teacher leadership into these two categories, describing formal leadership as a role occupied by designated individuals who inspire and guide their colleagues [20]. Informal teacher leadership, on the other hand, emerges when teachers take initiative by introducing new ideas, offering suggestions, and sharing experiences with peers. Muijs and Harris also acknowledge these two dimensions [21, p. 113], aligning their definition of formal teacher leadership with that of Emira [20]. However, they further highlight that formal leadership positions often separate teachers from direct classroom involvement. In contrast, informal teacher leadership encompasses classroom-related responsibilities such as coordinating activities, planning lessons, and fostering collaboration [22, p. 211].

A key question that arises is whether formal leadership aligns with the modern conceptualization of teacher leadership. As previously noted, Pounder associates formal teacher leadership with earlier stages of its evolution [23, 533]. Pounder further argues that the development of this concept has progressively distanced itself from a strictly formal perspective. The positive relationship between teacher leadership and well-being can be seen in teachers' overall job satisfaction and personal growth [24].

The prevalence of formal teacher leadership can be attributed to the hierarchical structure of the British school system, as discussed by Alma Harris [25, p. 315]. She argues that the rigid delineation of roles and responsibilities within schools presents a significant barrier to recognizing teachers as leaders. Moreover, she advocates for leadership to be exercised by teachers regardless of their formal appointment. Frost supports this viewpoint, asserting that teacher leadership is fundamentally about teachers exercising their agency to influence colleagues and their professional environment, rather than simply adhering to prescribed leadership roles [26, p. 337].

Taking into account these various perspectives, it can be concluded that informal teacher leadership is the dominant model in contemporary discourse. However, the presence of formal teacher leadership remains contingent on the structural and organizational framework of individual educational institutions.

The Role of Teacher Leadership in Enhancing Student Outcomes

Teacher leadership has been linked to increased student engagement and achievement. Schools that embrace teacher leadership cultivate environments where educators contribute to curriculum design and instructional decision-making, ensuring that students' needs are at the forefront of educational policies. A

study conducted in the UK identified several teacher leadership factors that positively influence student achievement, including setting high expectations, fostering student confidence, maintaining consistency, and encouraging a sense of responsibility in learning [23, p. 545].

An example of teacher leadership positively impacting student engagement can be seen in Frost's study of Tom Murphy, a newly qualified teacher. Murphy engaged his senior students by assigning them leadership roles in the classroom, dividing them into small groups responsible for preparing and delivering lessons. By allowing students to take ownership of their learning, Murphy fostered deeper engagement, collaboration, and independent thinking, ultimately leading to a significant professional achievement.

Conclusion. The present study set out to examine teacher leadership as a factor influencing students' academic outcomes within a higher education context. The findings obtained through semi-structured interviews with both faculty members and students indicate a clear association between teachers' leadership practices and students' academic engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes.

Qualitative analysis revealed that instructors recognized as informal leaders within the faculty demonstrated higher levels of pedagogical involvement, individualized feedback, and flexibility in instructional strategies. Students who had studied with these teachers consistently reported stronger academic motivation, clearer understanding of course requirements, and greater confidence in tackling complex theoretical material. In contrast, students described learning experiences with non-leader instructors as more standardized and less adaptive to individual learning needs, which, in some cases, coincided with lower academic engagement.

To contextualize these perceptions, students' academic performance data available in the Platonus system were examined at a descriptive level. Although the study did not aim at a full-scale quantitative analysis, a comparative overview indicated that student groups taught by recognized teacher leaders tended to demonstrate more stable academic performance and fewer instances of academic difficulties than groups taught primarily by non-leader faculty members. This trend supports the interview data suggesting that teacher leadership contributes not only to positive learning experiences but also to more consistent academic results.

Importantly, the findings suggest that teacher leadership manifests not through formal administrative roles but through daily pedagogical practices, including mentoring, timely feedback, academic support, and the creation of a psychologically safe learning environment. Such practices were repeatedly linked by students to improved learning outcomes, particularly in theoretically demanding courses.

At the same time, the study identified structural constraints that limit the broader development of teacher leadership, including heavy workloads, limited professional collaboration, and a lack of systematic platforms for sharing teaching practices. Faculty members acknowledged interest in leadership-oriented professional development but also expressed hesitation to engage in peer-level pedagogical exchange, often due to concerns related to trust and professional vulnerability.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that teacher leadership plays a tangible role in shaping students' academic outcomes and learning experiences. Strengthening leadership-oriented teaching practices and fostering a culture of professional collaboration may enhance both instructional quality and student achievement. Future research could build on these findings by incorporating a more extensive quantitative analysis of academic performance data and expanding the sample across multiple faculties or institutions to further validate the observed relationship between teacher leadership and student success.

REFERENCES:

1. Arjanto P., Senduk F.F.W., Melati I.S., Maduretno T.W., Kawulur H.R. **Moral Leadership in Primary Education: Constructing and Validating an Instrument for Principal Assessment.** *In Educational Process: International Journal*, 2025, vol. 14, art. e2025007. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.14.7>.
2. Rosenberg M.G., An Y. **Supporting Science Teachers' Learner-Centered Technology Integration through Situated Mentoring.** *In Educational Process: International Journal*, 2019, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 248-263. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2019.84.4>.
3. Day C., Gu Q., Sammons P. **The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes: How Successful School Leaders Use Transformational and Instructional Strategies to Make a Difference.** *In Educational Administration Quarterly*, 2016, vol. 52, pp. 221-258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X15616863>.
4. Hopic A., Kistoro H.C.A. **The Existence of Islamic Education in Pandemic Times.** *In Fikroh: Journal of Islamic Thought and Education*, 2022, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 153-170. <https://doi.org/10.37812/fikroh.v15i2.456>.
5. Berry B., Daughtrey A., Wieder A. **Teacher Leadership: Leading the Way to Effective Teaching and Learning.** Center for Teaching Quality, 2010, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234686653_Teacher_Leadership_Leading_the_Way_to_Effective_Teaching_and_Learning (accessed 21 November 2025).
6. Yaacob W., Don Y. **Teacher Leadership Model: Roles and Values.** *In Journal of Social Science Research*, 2018, vol. 12, pp. 2556-2567. <https://doi.org/10.24297/jssr.v12i1.6994>.

7. Cruickshank V. **The Influence of School Leadership on Student Outcomes.** *In Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 2017, vol. 5, pp. 115-123. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2017.59009>.
8. James S., Elaine A., Haigen H. **The Role of Teacher Leadership in How Principals Influence Classroom Instruction and Student Learning.** *In American Journal of Education*, 2016, vol. 123, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1086/688169>.
9. Jennifer W., et al. **Project Leadership: A Research Agenda for a Changing World.** *In Project Leadership and Society*, 2022, vol. 3, art. 100044. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2022.100044>.
10. Cohen L., Manion L., Morrison K. **Research Methods in Education.** 7th ed. London, Routledge, 2011.
11. Wisker G. **The Postgraduate Research Handbook.** 2nd ed. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
12. Bagley S., Tang K. **Teacher Leadership in Special Education: Exploring Skills, Roles, and Perceptions.** *In Leadership*, 2018, vol. 1. <https://doi.org/10.46767/kfp.2016-0023>.
13. Briggs A., Coleman M. **Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management.** 2nd ed. London, Sage, 2007.
14. Lenchuk I. **Reciprocal Teaching as an Instructional Strategy for Identifying Reading Literacy Problems: A Case Study of an Omani EFL Classroom.** *In International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 2020, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.23.2021.101.1.10>.
15. Rizwan A., Hassan I. **Roles of Competencies, Career Shock, and Satisfaction in Career Commitment: Evidence from Project-Based Organizations.** *In Project Leadership and Society*, 2022, vol. 3, art. 100052. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2022.100052>.
16. Abrahamsen H.N., Helstad K. **Teacher Leadership: Leading Professional Learning among Peers.** *In Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2024.2323652>.
17. Harris A., Jones M. **Middle Leaders Matter: Reflections, Recognition, and Renaissance.** *In School Leadership & Management*, 2017, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 213-216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2017.1323398>.
18. Harris A., Jones M., Ismail N., Nguyen D. **Middle Leaders and Middle Leadership in Schools: Exploring the Knowledge Base (2003–2017).** *In School Leadership & Management*, 2019, vol. 39, no. 3-4, pp. 255-277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1578738>.
19. Wilcoxon C., Newman R., Wulff M. **A Coaching and Mentoring Tool Anchors Support and Collaboration.** *In Educational Process: International Journal*, 2025, vol. 14, art. e2025001. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.14.1>.
20. Emira M. **Leading to Decide or Deciding to Lead? Understanding the Relationship Between Teacher Leadership and Decision Making.** *In Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143210373738>.
21. Muijs D., Harris A. **Teacher Leadership in (In)action: Three Case Studies of Contrasting Schools.** *In Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 2007, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 111-134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143207071387>.
22. Kansızoğlu H.B. **Investigating Turkish Teachers' Views and Practices on Writing Instruction in Secondary Schools: A Mixed-Methods Study.** *In Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 2023, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 211-247. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202319728>.
23. Pounder J. **Transformational Classroom Leadership: The Fourth Wave of Teacher Leadership?** *In Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 2006, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 533–545. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143206068216>.
24. Fosco D.S. **Educational Leader Wellbeing: A Systematic Review.** *In Educational Research Review*, 2022, vol. 37, art. 100487. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2022.100487>.
25. Harris A. **Teacher Leadership as Distributed Leadership: Heresy, Fantasy or Possibility?** *In School Leadership & Management*, 2003, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 313-324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1363243032000112801>.
26. Frost D. **Teacher Leadership: Values and Voice.** *In School Leadership*.

Information about the authors:

Zhumay Nurmira* – PhD, acting Associate Professor of the Department of theory and practice of translation, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Republic of Kazakhstan, 010005, Astana, 2 K. Satpayev Str., tel.: 87752326595, e-mail: zhumai_n_3@enu.kz.

Dzhabasheva Botagoz Maratovna – Master, Senior Lecturer of the Department of theory and practice of translation, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Republic of Kazakhstan, 010005, Astana, 2 K. Satpayev Str., tel.: 87015802197, e-mail: botagoz_dzhabash@mail.ru.

Marácz László – PhD, Doctor of Sciences, Professor of the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1012 WX Amsterdam, e-mail: maracz@uva.nl.

Жұмай Нұрмира* – PhD, Аударма теориясы мен практикасы кафедрасы доцентінің м.а., Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Қазақстан Республикасы, 010005, Астана қ., Қ.Сәтбаев көш. 2, тел.: 87752326595, e-mail: zhumai_n_3@enu.kz.

Джабашева Ботағоз Маратқызы – магистр, Аударма теориясы мен практикасы кафедрасының аға оқытушысы, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Қазақстан Республикасы, 010005, Астана қ., Қ.Сәтбаев көш. 2, тел.: 87015802197, e-mail: botagoz_dzhabash@mail.ru.

Мараш Ласло – PhD, ғылым докторы, Амстердам университетінің профессоры, Нидерланды, 1012 WX, Амстердам қ., e-mail: maracz@uva.nl.

Жұмай Нұрмира* – PhD, и.о. доцента кафедрасы теориясы мен практикасы кафедрасы, Евразийский национальный университет имени Л.Н. Гумилёва, Республика Казахстан, 010005, г. Астана, ул. К.Сатпаева 2, тел.: 87752326595, e-mail: zhumai_n_3@enu.kz.

Джабашева Ботағоз Маратовна – магистр, старший преподаватель кафедрасы теориясы мен практикасы кафедрасы, Евразийский национальный университет имени Л.Н. Гумилёва, Республика Казахстан, 010005, г. Астана, ул. К.Сатпаева 2, тел.: 87015802197, e-mail: botagoz_dzhabash@mail.ru.

Мараш Ласло – PhD, доктор наук, профессор Амстердамского университета, Нидерланды, 1012 WX, г. Амстердам, e-mail: maracz@uva.nl.

IRSTI 14.35.09

UDC 378.147:004.77

<https://doi.org/10.52269/SRDG2612088>

EXPLORING NEW REALITIES: THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL REALITY ON MODERN SLA

Zhussupova R.F.* – Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.

Gauriyeva G.M. – Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.

Gauriyeva A.K. – Master of Pedagogical Sciences, Teacher-moderator, Kanysh Satpayev Binom School, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.

Shadiyev R.N. – PhD, Professor, College of Education, Zhejiang University, Zhejiang Province, People's Republic of China.

The article examines how Virtual Reality (VR) technology is integrated into Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and its impact on learners' communication and cognitive growth. Highlighting the immersive and interactive qualities of VR environments, the study investigates how these tools can go beyond traditional teaching methods by providing rich, sensory-based learning experiences. Specifically focusing on university-level students of the specialty "English as a Foreign Language", the research uses VR applications like Mondly VR and Engage to improve speaking skills, boost motivation, and reduce language learning anxiety. The experiment involved pre- and post-tests centered on speaking, surveys using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, and semi-structured interviews. Results showed a 22% improvement in speaking scores, a 35% increase in learner motivation, and a 40% decrease in anxiety among the experimental group. The study also highlights VR's role in developing critical thinking, digital literacy, and professional skills for future foreign language teachers. By creating authentic and engaging scenarios, VR aligns with constructivist and experiential learning theories, while equipping learners with useful 21st-century skills. This research offers valuable insights into the educational advantages of VR and its expanding importance in SLA research and teacher training.

Key words: virtual reality, language acquisition, Mondly, education, motivation.

ЖАҢА АҚИҚАТТЫ ЗЕРТТЕУ: ВИРТУАЛДЫҚ АҚИҚАТТЫҢ ҚАЗІРГІ ЗАМАНҒЫ ЕКІНШІ ТІЛДІ МЕНГЕРУГЕ ӘСЕРІ

Жусупова Р.Ф.* – педагогика ғылымдарының кандидаты, Білім жоғары мектебінің қауымдастырылған профессоры, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы.

Гауриева Г.М. – педагогика ғылымдарының кандидаты, Білім жоғары мектебінің қауымдастырылған профессоры, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы.

Гауриева А.К. – педагогика ғылымдарының магистрі, модератор-мұғалім, Қаныш Сәтбаев атындағы Binom School мектеп-лицейі, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы.

Шадиев Р.Н. – PhD, Профессор, Білім Колледж, Чжэцзян университеті, Ганжею қ., Қытай Халық Республикасы.