Reporting period: Year 1 (2021)

Call Title (identifier):

Project Title: **Graduate students’ challenges with academic reading and writing in English medium universities in Kazakhstan**

Project’s number: OPCR2021013

Principal Investigator: Mir Afzal Tajik

PI’s position at School: Associate Professor

PI’s home School name: Graduate School of Education—NUGSE

PI’s contacts (phone, email): phone: +7 747 527 68 16; email: afzal.mir@nu.edu.kz

Total budget: $270,408

Budget received in the reporting period: $78,416

Budget spent in the reporting period:

Project start and end dates: January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023

PI Dr. Mir Afzal Tajik

Dean

Dr. Aida Sagintayeva

PI Dr. Mir Afzal Tajik

Dean

Dr. Aida Sagintayeva
Progress report

1) Key project details:
   - decision number: OPCR2021013
   - project title: Graduate students’ challenges with academic reading and writing in English medium universities in Kazakhstan
   - type of funding: NU-CRP
   - amount of funding granted: $270,408
   - funding period: January 2021—December 2023

2) Project publication data thus far:
   - number of all publications: 4 (1 published, 1 in printing, 1 submitted / in review process, and 1 to be submitted before Dec. 31)
   - publications in refereed international publications: 1 (submitted and is being reviewed)
   - bibliographic data:

3) Composition of the research team funded within the project:
   - number of researchers: 6 including an internal collaborator from NUSSH, and an external collaborator each from KIMEP, and Suleyman Demirel University (SDU);
   - the names of full-time researchers:
     - Guldana Akhmetova, Post-Doc
     - Lyudmila Fillipova, Research Assistant

4) Short description of the progress of the project (max. 2,500 characters):
   The following is a summary of work (in a chronological order) done in the first year of the project:
   - Prepared Ethics Application along with all supporting documents (survey questionnaire, qualitative interview questions, recruitment letters, and consent forms in three languages) and submitted to NU-IREC in January, 2021;
   - Hired a Post-Doc and a research assistant—RA in January, 2021;
- Received IREC approval on 17 February 2021;
- Provided basic training to RAs and orientation to the collaborators from KIMEP and SDU in February, 2021;
- Recruited research sites (10 universities across Kazakhstan) and research participants in March, 2021;
- Purchased necessary devices for data collection through NU Research Office in March, 2021;
- Piloted the survey questionnaire and launched it online in April 2021 in 10 universities participating in this study;
- Did a comprehensive review of literature, both local/regional and international, in May 2021;
- Received 320 survey responses in June 2021 and did preliminary analysis of the results;
- Submitted two manuscripts during June-August 2021 for publication in credible local journals for disseminating the survey results to local audience in Kazakhstan / Central Asia;
- Developed and submitted a manuscript for publication in a Q1 international journal (Journal of Asian Englishes) during September-November, 2021;
- Conducted Focus-Group Interviews with Master students at NU during October 2021;
- Presented the survey results in the International Scientific Conference on "Innovations in Education", held on 29th of October, 2021 at Osh State University, Kyrgyzstan;
- Working on a third manuscript in Russian to be published in the Journal of Higher Education, Russia;
- Visited Almaty and conducted data collection there from November 28—December 1, 2021. A total of 18 interviews conducted in Almaty are now being transcribed;
- Working on a second manuscript for publication in a Q1 journal;

All the targets set for Year 1 of the project have been successfully achieved. One Q1 publication has already been submitted and currently working on another one; one article in a credible local journal has already been published, another is in printing, and a third one in a regional journal will be submitted towards the end of this month. Despite the fact that much of our time in the first year was taken by preparation and piloting of research tools, ethics application, site and participants’ selection, hiring and training research assistants, developing understanding with the external collaborators, and other administrative activities, often delayed by Covid-19, we were able to achieve our targets related to data collection, preliminary analysis and publications. Although the article submitted to the Q1 journal has not been published yet, it is under review and we are confident to get a positive feedback from the journal’s reviewers. We are confident that by March 2022, we will have one Q1 article published, another one accepted, and three articles published in local and regional journals. The collaboration with both KIMEP and SDU has worked well, except a little hitch caused by the change of a Co-PI from SDU. The project has made its visibility and been acknowledged by the collaborators and others. The conference presentation was very well received by the audience from Kyrgyzstan and other countries. A face book page has been created to share updates and engage with researchers, students and practitioners.

5) How the funding being applied for applies to this project (in brief):

The funding received from NU has made this project possible. Without the funding, we would not have been able to achieve the targets mentioned above. Also, the funding has enabled us to develop collaboration with both internal and external partners. The leadership of the collaborating universities has acknowledged and appreciated NU’s commitment towards promoting a culture of research and scholarship by building research capacity in Kazakhstani institutions. In brief, the funding is very timely, relevant and adequate for covering the costs incurred in conducting this collaborative research project.

Appendices:
1. Appendix A: Article published in local journal
2. Appendix B: Article in printing in a local journal
3. Appendix C: Article submitted to a Q1 Journal (*Asian Englishes*, Taylor and Francis)
4. Appendix D: Draft Manuscript for publication in the *Journal of Higher Education*, Russia
5. Appendix E: Conference Presentation