Let's Collaborate with Dinara on trilingual policy in education in Kazakhstan

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

policy, teachers, research, inform, first year student, motivated, trilingual, implementing, language, rural schools, english, supervisor, urban, schools, change, podcasts, country, kazakhstan, doctoral training, phd

SPEAKERS

Dinara Shaimakhanova, Catherine McDonald

Catherine McDonald 00:01
Hello, and welcome to Let's Collaborate a podcast from the South West Doctoral Training Partnership. I'm your host, Catherine McDonald. And joining me for this episode is Dinara Shaimakhanova from the University of Bristol, who's looking into trilingual policy analysis in education. Dinara, I'm sure you can explain and elaborate much better than that, please tell us all about your research.

Dinara Shaimakhanova 00:26
So my research is about language policy and education. It's about trilingual language policies, that means that, at the moment, in my country, in the context of my country, we are implementing the policy in education when education is provided by means of three languages is delivered through three different languages, which one is state language, and other one is inter ethnic language and the global language. And the global I mean English. So in my research, I'm looking at this perspective of English language teachers English as a foreign language teachers, and how do they actually implement this policy? What do they understand by this policy? Are they aware or not of this policy? And what kind of power do they exercise while implementing this policy? Do they have any ideologies to rather do this policy? Or just ignore it or resist to do this policy? And, of course, what is their agency in this policy implementation process? And

Catherine McDonald 01:29
tell us more about what country you're focusing on? And also what motivated you to do this research?

Dinara Shaimakhanova 01:35
So I'm from Kazakhstan. And before I did my, before I started my PhD, I was working as a teacher at secondary school. And I was working as a teacher of English as a foreign language. So actually, that motivated me because I was going through this policy, from the point from the perspective of this teachers who am I am researching at the moment. And I have seen, you know, like, it's not about advantages and disadvantages of the policy. But I have seen this, how this policy is being implemented on the bottom up, I mean, like, bottom up power level. So that's why that's motivated me actually, to do this research to really find out what teachers real perspective on this policy, because sometimes

policies are just something like maybe we can call it policy dumping. They're given us from the top down managers, and you should just do this. But nobody asks, from the bottom up, like whether these teachers, the students, they need this or do not need this. So that's why I was motivated to analyse this policy and to find out if this policy really works or not in my country.

Catherine McDonald 02:52
And how are you actually looking into it? What What methodology using?

Dinara Shaimakhanova 02:56
I'm doing qualitative, qualitative research. So I'm looking at two different contexts, urban and rural schools, mainstream schools, and I'm looking at so I already completed my data. So I have collected my data. So what did I do? I had several multiple case studies in urban schools and multiple case studies in rural schools. And I was doing this interviews with teachers, I was attending their lessons observing their lessons, I did some focus group interviews with this, I mean, these groups of teachers, rural and urban schools, and also I'm doing documentary analysis, which means like policy documents, also some documents from teachers, like there may be lesson plans, textbooks, and I want to see this big whole picture and give this kind of policy critical analysis to the big whole picture out of this cases that I'm looking for.

Catherine McDonald 03:56
And what what do you ultimately hope it will change or inform, you know, if you could sort of what's your main legacy that you would love to achieve?

Dinara Shaimakhanova 04:04
You know, when I was a first year student at my PhD, now I'm writing my fourth year. So when I was a first year student, I told my supervisors that maybe by the end of my research, I will change the policy system in Kazakhstan. And my supervisor asked me, Are you a president? Are you a minister of education? How are you going to change the policy? And then I start thinking, oh, what am I actually doing with this policy? And later on with years of my studies, I understood that actually, maybe I'm not the one who will change anything like I mean, practically in this policy, but maybe I will inform the policymakers, the teachers, the parents, the students about not about how to do the policy the correct way or, like right or wrong way, but to inform them about what is this policy actually is like and what this policy will lead us to What are some benefits of this policy maybe? And also to inform big, you know, this not only educational but big Society, big social group about what is teachers agency in the policy and to what extent teachers are important when any kind of policy is being just, I mean, it's been just sent to educational institutions to do it.

Catherine McDonald 05:25
Wow, it sounds amazing. And it also sounds like you're aiming so high with what you want to achieve. And why not you could find that teacher and go back to her one day or to him one day and say, Here it is, here's the policy change. Dinara, I wish you all the best with it. Thank you for joining me today. And thanks to you for listening to this episode of Let's Collaborate from the South West Doctoral Training Partnership. This was produced in collaboration with Research Podcasts and was recorded at the SWDTP conference in 2023. Don't forget to subscribe wherever you receive your podcasts.