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THE TYPOLOGY OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS THREATENING LANGUAGE ECOLOGY

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Abstract. This article proposes a new typology of sociolinguistic factors that negatively affect the stable balance of the native language within the framework of language ecology. The six-directional classification presented in the article was tested on the material of the Uzbek language. The obtained results will undoubtedly serve the practical improvement of language policy.

Keywords: linguoecology, language ecology, sociolinguistic factors, language policy, language norm, globalization, language shift, narrowing of functional domains, Uzbek language.

INTRODUCTION

The term linguoecology is relatively new in linguistics. It was mainly introduced by E. Haugen in 1971–1972 and refers to "the study of the interaction between a particular language and its environment." The ecological analogy here does not refer to the biological environment, but to the socio-cultural ecosystem of a language, the community that uses it, its consciousness, worldview, communicative relations, issues of language policy, and its interaction with other languages.

The protection of language ecology became especially relevant in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. According to P. Mühlhäusler, "language loss is not an isolated phenomenon, but the result of ecosystem disruption." These ideas are relevant not only to endangered minority languages but also to languages with official status. This is because the narrowing of functional domains disrupts the internal stability of any language. In his well-known GIDS model (the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) J. Fishman proposed assessing language vitality through the degree of intergenerational transmission. This approach is also accepted as one of the methodological foundations of the present analysis.

In Uzbek linguistics, linguoecological problems have mainly been examined within the framework of speech culture and literary norm. E. Begmatov defines the preservation of language purity, fluency, and expressive power as the main task of speech culture. M. Mirtojiyev and N. Mahmudov emphasize that language and culture form an interconnected system. However, the study of factors threatening language ecology as a separate system, especially their typological classification, has not yet been sufficiently explored in Uzbek linguistics.

The aim of this article is to systematically classify the sociolinguistic factors that negatively affect language ecology within a theoretically grounded typology and to provide practical evidence for this typology through the example of the Uzbek language. The scientific novelty of the study is reflected in the development of a coherent six-directional classification based on J. Fishman's model.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The sources of the study include: a) works by Uzbek and foreign linguists on linguoecology, sociolinguistics, and language policy from 1972 to 2025; b) legislative documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan concerning language; and c) materials of modern Uzbek speech, including mass media, social media texts, and examples of oral communication.

The main method of the study is theoretical-descriptive analysis, supplemented by the following specific methods: 1) the structural-systemic approach, which examines each factor as an element of the general ecosystem; 2) the comparative-typological method, which compares various factors according to their nature and degree of influence; 3) sociolinguistic observation, which records examples from modern Uzbek speech; and 4) systematic analysis of linguistic literature.

In developing the typology, the following criteria were used: a) the nature of the factor, whether internal or external; b) its scope of influence, whether global, national, regional, or subnational; c) its mechanism of operation, whether direct or indirect; and d) the language level to which it is directed, whether lexical, grammatical, functional, or related to the overall vitality of the language. On the basis of these criteria, six types of sociolinguistic factors were distinguished.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

As a result of the study, a six-directional typology of sociolinguistic factors threatening language ecology was developed on the basis of J. Fishman's model and the material of the Uzbek language.

1. Macrosocial factors

The first group includes global and national macro-level processes. The strongest among them is the pressure of international and dominant languages under the conditions of globalization. Today, there are two main sources of pressure on the Uzbek language. On the one hand, there is the Russian language inherited from the former Soviet period; on the other hand, there is English as the linguistic instrument of globalization. This pressure is clearly observed at the lexical level. For example, hundreds of units such as manager, marketing, content, lifehack, trading, deadline, and feedback enrich the vocabulary of the Uzbek language, but at the same time push native equivalents out of active use.

The second macrosocial factor includes migration and urbanization processes. As a result of labor migration, the number of children experiencing a narrowing of the communicative domain of the native language and, consequently, language attrition is increasing. Urbanization, in turn, leads to the artificial mixing of dialects and the formation of "mixed urban speech." As D. Nettle and S. Romaine note, "the loss of linguistic diversity has long-term cultural consequences similar to the loss of biological diversity."

2. Political and legal factors

This group covers factors related to language policy and its practical implementation. The Law "On the State Language," adopted in Uzbekistan in 1989 and revised in 1995, strengthened the legal status of the Uzbek language. However, the gap between legal norms and practical implementation remains a linguoecological problem. The fact that the functional domain of the native language has not been fully established in documentation, certain areas of higher education, scientific activity, and international business communication poses a significant threat to the internal ecosystem of the language.

The second legal factor is the prolonged alphabet reform. Uncertainty in the transition to the Latin script, the parallel use of both Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and repeated changes in spelling rules have caused disruptions in intergenerational written transmission. Today's younger generation is often forced to read the works of Cho'lpon, A. Qodiriy, or G'. G'ulom not in their original script but through transliteration. In Fishman's terms, this represents a "gradual disruption of intergenerational transmission for the internal language of the community."

3. Communicative-functional factors

The third group includes factors related to the real domains of language use. First of all, this includes the narrowing of functional domains. In modern Uzbek, the insufficient development of

specialized terminology in science, technology, digital technologies, and international business is gradually pushing the native language out of these spheres. For example, serious academic discussion in computer programming, artificial intelligence, or international law is often conducted in English or Russian. This, in turn, has a serious impact on language ecology.

The second dangerous phenomenon in this sphere is code-switching and diglossia. In the speech of young people, elements of two or three languages are often combined within a single sentence. For example, the sentence "Bugun deadline yaqin, lekin meeting'gacha hech bo'lmasa draft tayyorlashim kerak" weakens both the syntactic and lexical norms of the native language at the same time.

4. Cultural and psychological factors

The fourth group includes factors related to language prestige, linguistic attitudes, and identity. When language is chosen primarily as a means of gaining economic and social benefits, the value of the native language as symbolic capital decreases. The practice of some Uzbek families sending their children to Russian- or English-medium kindergartens is a practical manifestation of this factor.

The second important psychological factor is the stigmatization of dialects. As a result of absolutizing the literary language norm, some regional dialects are evaluated as "incorrect" in public speech, which leads to a decrease in linguistic diversity.

5. Educational and pedagogical factors

The fifth group consists of factors that operate through the education system. The following can be distinguished: a) the insufficient functional orientation of native language lessons, where the main focus is placed on grammatical analysis while communicative competence is not developed adequately; b) the direct translation of textbooks from foreign languages in certain fields of higher education, which weakens the Uzbek academic style; and c) the insufficient level of teachers' speech culture. When combined, these factors reduce the reproductive capacity of the language ecosystem.

6. Information-technological factors

The sixth group represents new linguoecological challenges of the twenty-first century. The digital environment, social networks, and short-text communication such as SMS, Telegram, and Instagram affect the graphic and orthographic norms of the language. In Uzbek, this phenomenon is visible in the chaotic mixing of Latin and Cyrillic scripts, the violation of spelling norms as a result of rapid transliteration, and the replacement of grammatical structures by emojis and internet jargon.

In addition, the limited activity of the Uzbek language in the digital ecosystem and the restricted development of artificial intelligence and NLP models for our native language represent the institutional aspect of this factor. L. Bromham and co-authors, in their statistical analysis of global threat factors, show that the presence of a language in digital infrastructure is an important predictor of its vitality.

The theoretical significance of the proposed typology lies in the fact that it integrates existing paradigms in the study of language ecology. Although E. Haugen, in his classical work, separately examined the demographic, social, political, and cultural parameters of language, the nature of interaction among these parameters was not fully classified. The present typology, using the Uzbek language as an example, discusses each factor separately while also viewing them as components of an interconnected ecosystem.

Macrosocial pressure alone is not sufficient; it becomes a real threat only when combined with gaps in political and legal protection and cultural-psychological tolerance toward such pressure. Conversely, if the education system is strong and digital infrastructure can fill existing gaps, the

disruption of the language ecosystem slows down. This analysis confirms the logic of gradualness found in J. Fishman's GIDS model.

From the point of view of practical application, each group of factors requires a separate linguoecological strategy. In response to macrosocial pressure, nationalization of terminology is needed. To address political and legal gaps, real monitoring of the implementation of language legislation is necessary. To overcome communicative narrowing, specialized speech styles should be developed. At the cultural-psychological level, the equal value of the literary norm and dialects should be promoted. In the field of education, programs oriented toward communicative pragmatics and text analysis are needed. In the digital ecosystem, the wide development of Uzbek NLP, corpora, and artificial intelligence tools is essential.

Linguoecological threat factors do not have a catastrophic character for the Uzbek language, since Uzbek has nearly 35 million speakers, the status of a state language, and a rich cultural heritage. However, language ecology theory teaches that even the strongest languages may weaken functionally. Even if a language is used by the majority, if it is not used in significant domains, it may be considered to be undergoing ecological decline.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, a directional typology of sociolinguistic factors threatening language ecology was examined. Each group differs in its scope of operation, mechanism, and specific manifestation in the conditions of the Uzbek language. The analysis shows that linguoecology is not merely a separate linguistic field, but an interdisciplinary area located at the intersection of linguistics, sociology, political science, pedagogy, and information technology. In order to ensure the ecological stability of the Uzbek language, attention must be paid to all the factors mentioned above simultaneously; that is, the institutional, functional, and symbolic layers of the language must be strengthened together.

For future research, it is relevant to conduct empirical analyses of each group of factors on the basis of sociolinguistic surveys and corpus analysis, to develop an adapted version of the GIDS or EGIDS scales for the Uzbek language, and to carry out a separate monographic study of threats in the digital ecosystem. The problem of language ecology is not only a matter of theoretical interest; it is a practical responsibility connected with the spiritual future of the nation.

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