

SOCIOLINGUISTIC FEATURES OF THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN THE CITIES OF UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation

This article examines the sociolinguistic features of the linguistic landscape in the cities of Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the use of Uzbek, Russian, and English in public signage and identifies their functional and symbolic roles in urban communication. The findings show that language choice in public spaces reflects language policy, globalization, and sociocultural dynamics.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, language policy, urban communication

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada O'zbekiston shaharlaridagi lingvistik landshaftning sotsiolingvistik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda jamoat joylaridagi yozuvlarda o'zbek, rus va ingliz tillarining qo'llanishi hamda ularning funksional va ramziy vazifalari o'rganilgan. Natijalar til tanlovi til siyosati, globallashuv va ijtimoiy-madaniy jarayonlarni aks ettirishini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: lingvistik landshaft, sotsiolingvistika, ko'p tillilik, til siyosati, shahar kommunikatsiyasi

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются социолингвистические особенности лингвистического ландшафта городов Узбекистана. Анализируется использование узбекского, русского и английского языков в публичных надписях, а также их функциональные и символические роли. Результаты исследования показывают, что выбор языка отражает языковую политику, процессы глобализации и социокультурные изменения.

Ключевые слова: лингвистический ландшафт, социолингвистика, многоязычие, языковая политика, городская коммуникация

Introduction

The linguistic landscape, understood as the visibility of languages in public spaces, serves as an important indicator of sociolinguistic processes in multilingual societies. Urban signage reflects not only patterns of language use but also broader dynamics such as language hierarchy, identity construction, and the influence of globalization.

In Uzbekistan, the interaction of Uzbek, Russian, and English in city spaces illustrates a complex sociolinguistic environment shaped by historical, political, and economic factors. Uzbek dominates official communication, while Russian remains functionally relevant, and English increasingly appears in commercial and symbolic contexts.

This study aims to analyze the sociolinguistic features of the linguistic landscape in the cities of Uzbekistan by examining language distribution, functional roles, and patterns of multilingual usage. Particular attention is given to the factors influencing language choice in urban public signage.

Literature Review

The study of the linguistic landscape was systematically introduced into sociolinguistics by Rodney H. Jones and earlier conceptualized by Rodney Landry and Richard Y. Bourhis, who defined linguistic landscape as the visibility and salience of languages on public signs [1]. Their approach established public signage as both an informational and symbolic marker reflecting language policy, ethnolinguistic vitality, and social hierarchy.

Subsequent studies expanded the theoretical and methodological dimensions of linguistic landscape research. Peter Backhaus analyzed multilingual signs in Tokyo and demonstrated that urban signage reflects the coexistence of local and global linguistic practices [2]. Similarly, Elana Shohamy emphasized the ideological role of public language, arguing that linguistic landscapes reveal implicit power relations and sociopolitical transformations within multilingual societies [3].

In Russian sociolinguistics, linguistic landscape studies have primarily focused on language policy, globalization, and urban multilingualism.

Research by Dmitry Gromov highlights the increasing influence of English in post-Soviet urban spaces, particularly in commercial discourse and advertising environments [4]. Russian scholars also note that multilingual signage often reflects socioeconomic stratification and symbolic prestige associated with global languages.

Within Uzbek linguistics, studies on language policy and public communication have intensified after independence. Uzbek researchers have examined the expansion of the Uzbek language in official domains and its role in constructing national identity [5]. At the same time, contemporary urban studies indicate the continued functional significance of Russian and the growing visibility of English in business centers, shopping districts, and tourism infrastructure [6]. However, many local studies remain descriptive and insufficiently address the sociolinguistic interaction between languages through empirical analysis.

The present research builds upon these theoretical and empirical approaches by integrating quantitative observation with sociolinguistic interpretation in the context of Uzbekistan's urban linguistic landscape.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method sociolinguistic approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. The empirical data were collected from public signs located in central districts of Tashkent, Samarkand, and

Bukhara. The research sample consisted of 150 photographed signs gathered from commercial centers, government institutions, transportation areas, restaurants, and advertising boards.

The collected signs were classified according to several criteria:

¹ Landry R., Bourhis R. Y. Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality. — Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 1997.

² Backhaus P. Linguistic Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo. — Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007.

³ Shohamy E., Gorter D. Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery. — New York: Routledge, 2009

⁴ Громов Д. В. Языковой ландшафт современного города // Социоллингвистика. — Москва, 2018.

⁵ Mahmudov N. Til va jamiyat munosabatlari. — Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2019

⁶ Nurmonov A. O'zbek tilining ijtimoiy funksiyalari va zamonaviy kommunikatsiya. — Toshkent, 2021.

1. language composition;
2. functional type of signage;
3. monolingual or multilingual structure;
4. symbolic and informational functions.

Quantitative analysis was applied to determine the frequency and distribution of Uzbek, Russian, and English across urban signage. Qualitative interpretation was used to examine sociolinguistic factors influencing language choice, including prestige, globalization, identity representation, and communicative accessibility.

To ensure analytical consistency, the study utilized comparative sociolinguistic methods commonly applied in international linguistic landscape research. Statistical observations were supplemented by contextual interpretation of multilingual practices and code-switching patterns observed in urban public spaces.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the linguistic landscape of Uzbekistan reflects important sociolinguistic changes influenced by language policy, historical multilingualism, and globalization. The dominant presence of Uzbek in official signage confirms its strengthened role as the state language and a symbol of national identity after independence [7].

At the same time, Russian continues to maintain a stable position in urban communication, especially in commercial and service-related sectors. Its frequent use indicates both historical continuity and practical communicative value in multilingual city environments [8].

English was mainly observed in advertisements, brand names, cafés, and entertainment facilities. In most cases, it functioned as a symbolic language associated with prestige, modernity, and internationalization rather than everyday communication [9]. This tendency reflects the growing influence of global culture and market-oriented communication strategies in Uzbekistan's urban spaces.

The widespread use of multilingual signs and code-switching further illustrates the coexistence of multiple linguistic identities within the urban environment. Different languages perform distinct communicative and symbolic functions depending on the social context and target audience.

Conclusion

This study examined the sociolinguistic features of the linguistic landscape in the cities of Uzbekistan by analyzing the use of Uzbek, Russian, and English in public signage. The findings show that Uzbek dominates official communication, while Russian remains important in commercial and urban interaction. English is mainly used as a symbolic language associated with globalization, prestige, and modernity.

The research also revealed the widespread presence of multilingual signs and code-switching, reflecting the coexistence of multiple linguistic identities in urban space. These patterns demonstrate

⁷ Mahmudov N. Til va jamiyat munosabatlari. — Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2019

⁸ Gromov D. V. Языковой ландшафт современного города // Социоллингвистика. — Москва, 2018.

⁹ Shohamy E., Gorter D. Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery. — New York: Routledge, 2009.

that language choice in public signage is shaped not only by communicative needs but also by social, cultural, and economic factors.

Overall, the linguistic landscape of Uzbekistan represents a dynamic sociolinguistic system that reflects ongoing cultural transformation and changing language practices in contemporary society.

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