

LANGUAGE AS THE MIRROR OF A NATION: THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE STATE LANGUAGE IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: This article investigates the role of language not only as a tool for communication but as a symbol of state independence, the foundation of national identity, and a driver of social progress. The article analyzes the legal status of the Uzbek language, its role in public administration, education, science, and digital technologies. Furthermore, it justifies the strategic importance of preserving and developing the state language in the context of globalization.

Keywords: State language, national sovereignty, language policy, social stability, digitalization, linguistic culture, terminology, mother tongue, self-awareness, spiritual heritage.

On the world map, every nation is distinguished by its culture, traditions, and, most importantly, its language. Language is a sacred bond that unites a nation's existence, its historical roots, and its future goals. Although more than thirty years have passed since the adoption of the Law “On the State Language” of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the issue of language remains more relevant today than ever. This is because language is not just a collection of grammatical rules but a foundation that ensures the political, economic, and spiritual independence of the state.¹

The Uzbek language is one of the richest and oldest languages in the world, having refined the thoughts and reflections of great thinkers, poets, and statesmen over centuries. The role of the state language in society is measured by the extent of its application in all spheres—from official record-keeping to high-technology platforms.²

The relationship between language and society is a fundamental direction of sociolinguistics. The great thinker Alisher Navoi, in his work *Muhokamatul-Lughatayn* (The Comparison of Two Languages), scientifically proved the elegance and richness of the Turkic language. He regarded language as the honor and pride of a nation.³

In modern Western linguistics, the hypothesis of Benjamin Whorf and Edward Sapir explains the influence of language on human cognition. According to them, humans perceive the world through the prism of the language they speak. Among Uzbek scholars, N. Mahmudov has researched the integrity of language with culture,

¹ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the State Language." (New edition).

² Mirziyoyev, Sh.M. Strategy of New Uzbekistan. – Tashkent: "O'zbekiston", 2021.

³ Alisher Navoi. *Muhokamatul-Lughatayn*. – Tashkent: "Fan", 1967

while A. Nurmonov investigated the social structure of language. These studies show that the state language is a primary factor in ensuring national unity.⁴

Discussion and Analysis:

1. The State Language—The Legal Pillar of Independence

Every sovereign state must have a single language for communication and official business within its territory. Article 4 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan strictly defines the Uzbek language as the state language. This means that in public administration, the judicial system, legislation, and international relations, this language takes precedence. Language is the "borderless border" of a state. If the state language is pushed out of official circles, the political will of that state weakens. Therefore, transitioning all levels of government documentation fully into the Uzbek language is a matter of national security.⁵

2. Integration of Education and Science

The survival of a language depends not just on it being spoken in the streets, but on its application in science. If the Uzbek language does not adapt to express modern terms in physics, biology, IT, and economics, it risks becoming a "dead" language. Today, improving the quality of textbooks and encouraging the writing of scientific dissertations in the mother tongue is an urgent task. Providing education in the native language serves to shape the worldview of the younger generation based on national values.⁶

3. Language and National Spirituality

The Uzbek language preserves the unique concepts of our people, such as "andisha" (modesty/thoughtfulness), "shafqat" (compassion), "oila" (family), and "mahalla" (community). Words that cannot be directly translated into foreign languages but can only be felt are the carriers of a nation's genetic code.⁷ The state language creates the environment for the development of national literature and art. As the language changes, so does the psychology of the people. Therefore, protecting the language means protecting national identity from alienation.

4. Challenges of Globalization and the Digital World

In the 21st century, the status of a language is determined by its presence in the virtual world. If a language does not exist on the internet, it loses its prestige among the youth. The creation of software, artificial intelligence systems, and electronic dictionaries in the Uzbek language increases its competitiveness. The expansion of the Uzbek language segment on platforms like Google Translate and Wikipedia represents a

⁴ Mahmudov, N. Language and Culture. – Tashkent: "Ma'naviyat", 2013.

⁵ The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. – Tashkent: O'zbekiston, 2023.

⁶ Sapir, E. Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech. – New York, 1921.

⁷ Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language. 5 volumes. – Tashkent: "O'zbekiston milliy ensiklopediyasi", 2006-2008.

global victory for the language. Furthermore, ensuring that advertisements and outdoor signs comply with state language rules is part of aesthetic and cultural education.⁸

5. Social Stability and the Unifying Function

Uzbekistan is a multi-ethnic country. The state language is a tool that unites all nations and ethnic groups around the single idea of the "People of Uzbekistan." When representatives of other nationalities learn the Uzbek language, it facilitates their integration into society and ensures social justice. Language acts as a bridge of communication, resolving misunderstandings between different layers of the population.

In conclusion, the Uzbek language is a golden chain linking our people's past, present, and bright future. Strengthening the role of the language at the state level is not a task that can be accomplished solely through laws or government decrees. It depends on every citizen's respect for their mother tongue, their correct use of it, and their responsibility to pass it on to future generations in its pure form. We must not only preserve our language but also develop it, adapt it to modern needs, and increase its prestige in the international arena. Language is the face of the nation and the symbol of the state. Protecting it is equivalent to protecting the homeland. Truly, if the language lives, the nation lives; if the language rises, the state continues to rise.

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⁸ Crystal, D. Language Death. – Cambridge University Press, 2000.