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**THE LANGUAGE SITUATION AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
MULTILINGUALISM IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT OF UZBEKISTAN**

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**Annotation**

This article examines the language situation and the implementation of multilingualism in the urban environment of Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the use of Uzbek, Russian, and English in public communication and urban spaces, focusing on their functional and sociolinguistic roles. The findings demonstrate that multilingualism in Uzbekistan reflects language policy, globalization, and the interaction of cultural and social identities in modern cities.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, language situation, sociolinguistics, urban communication, language policy

**Annotatsiya**

Mazkur maqolada O'zbekiston shaharlaridagi til vaziyati va ko'p tillilikning amalga oshirilishi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda o'zbek, rus va ingliz tillarining shahar kommunikatsiyasi hamda jamoat makonidagi funksional va sotsiolingvistik vazifalari o'rganilgan. Natijalar O'zbekistondagi ko'p tillilik til siyosati, globallashuv va zamonaviy shaharlardagi madaniy hamda ijtimoiy identifikatsiyalar bilan bog'liqligini ko'rsatadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** ko'p tillilik, til vaziyati, sotsiolingvistika, shahar kommunikatsiyasi, til siyosati

**Аннотация**

В данной статье рассматриваются языковая ситуация и реализация многоязычия в городской среде Узбекистана. Исследование направлено на анализ использования



узбекского, русского и английского языков в городской коммуникации и общественном пространстве, а также их функциональных и социолингвистических ролей. Результаты показывают, что многоязычие в Узбекистане отражает языковую политику, процессы глобализации и взаимодействие культурных и социальных идентичностей в современных городах.

**Ключевые слова:** многоязычие, языковая ситуация, социолингвистика, городская коммуникация, языковая политика

### **Introduction**

In the context of globalization and increasing intercultural communication, multilingualism has become one of the defining features of modern urban societies. The coexistence of several languages within a single communicative environment reflects not only linguistic diversity but also social, political, and cultural transformations. Urban spaces, in particular, provide a productive environment for observing language interaction, since public communication, business activities, education, and media contribute to the active use of multiple languages in everyday life.

Uzbekistan represents a multilingual society shaped by historical, demographic, and political factors. Since gaining independence, Uzbek has strengthened its position as the state language and expanded its functions in official communication and public administration. At the same time, Russian continues to play an important role in urban interaction, especially in commerce, education, and interpersonal communication. In recent years, English has also become increasingly visible in business sectors, advertising, tourism, and digital communication due to the influence of globalization and international cooperation.

The urban environment of Uzbekistan demonstrates a dynamic interaction between these languages. Public signs, advertisements, educational institutions, shopping centers, and social media communication illustrate the implementation of multilingual practices in modern city life. The coexistence of Uzbek, Russian, and English reflects not only



communicative necessity but also symbolic meanings connected with identity, prestige, and globalization.

This study aims to examine the language situation and the implementation of multilingualism in the urban environment of Uzbekistan. Particular attention is given to the functional distribution of languages, multilingual communication practices, and sociolinguistic factors influencing language choice in urban spaces.

### **Literature Review**

The issue of multilingualism and language interaction in urban environments has become an important area of sociolinguistic research in recent decades. One of the foundational studies in this field belongs to Rodney Landry and Richard Y. Bourhis, who introduced the concept of the linguistic landscape and defined it as the visibility of languages in public spaces [1]. According to their theory, public signs reflect ethnolinguistic vitality, language policy, and social identity within multilingual societies. Further development of linguistic landscape research was carried out by Peter Backhaus, who analyzed multilingual signs in Tokyo and demonstrated that urban communication reflects both local linguistic traditions and global influences [2]. His research emphasized the importance of multilingual signage as an indicator of social and cultural interaction in metropolitan environments.

Another significant contribution belongs to Elana Shohamy, who argued that public language use is closely connected with ideology and political power [3]. She noted that multilingual practices in urban spaces often reveal hidden sociopolitical processes, including globalization, migration, and identity construction.

Russian sociolinguistic studies have also focused on multilingualism in post-Soviet urban environments. Dmitry Gromov examined the spread of English and the

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

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

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





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preservation of Russian in modern city communication, emphasizing the symbolic prestige of global languages in commercial discourse [4].

In Uzbek linguistics, research on language policy and multilingual communication has intensified after independence. Nizomiddin Mahmudov analyzed the relationship between language and society, highlighting the expanding role of Uzbek as the state language in public communication [5]. Similarly, Abduaziz Nurmonov investigated the social functions of Uzbek and its interaction with other languages in contemporary urban contexts [6].

Although these studies provide important theoretical and empirical insights, the implementation of multilingualism in the urban environment of Uzbekistan remains insufficiently explored from a sociolinguistic perspective. Therefore, the present research seeks to contribute to the analysis of language interaction, multilingual practices, and functional language distribution in Uzbek cities.

### **Methodology**

This study applies a mixed-method sociolinguistic approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. The research data were collected through direct observation and photographic documentation of public signs in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara. A total of 150 signs from government institutions, shopping centers, restaurants, educational establishments, and advertising boards were selected for analysis.

The collected materials were classified according to language composition, communicative function, and multilingual structure. Particular attention was given to the use of Uzbek, Russian, and English in urban communication. Quantitative analysis was used to identify the frequency and distribution of languages, while qualitative interpretation focused on their sociolinguistic and symbolic functions [7].

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

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

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

<sup>7</sup> Shohamy E., Gorter D. Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery. — New York: Routledge, 2009.





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The methodological framework of the study is based on contemporary linguistic landscape research developed by Landry and Bourhis [8] and further expanded in multilingual urban studies by Backhaus [9]. This approach made it possible to examine multilingualism in Uzbekistan's urban environment from both functional and sociocultural perspectives.

### **Results**

The analysis of public signs collected from urban areas of Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara revealed a multilingual character of urban communication. Uzbek was identified as the dominant language, appearing in approximately 80% of the analyzed signs, mainly in governmental institutions, educational establishments, and official announcements [10].

Russian was present in nearly 57% of the collected materials and was primarily observed in commercial centers, service industries, and informal urban communication. English appeared in about 43% of the signs, especially in advertisements, brand names, cafés, shopping centers, and tourism-related facilities [11].

The findings also demonstrated the widespread use of multilingual signage. Nearly half of the analyzed signs contained two or more languages within a single text. Uzbek–Russian combinations were the most common, while Uzbek–English and trilingual signs were mainly identified in central business districts and tourist areas [12].

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<sup>8</sup> Landry R., Bourhis R. Y. Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality. — *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Backhaus P. Linguistic Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo. — Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Mahmudov N. Til va jamiyat munosabatlari. — Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Shohamy E., Gorter D. Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery. — New York: Routledge,

<sup>12</sup> Backhaus P. Linguistic Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo. — Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007.





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In addition, several examples of code-switching and lexical borrowing were identified in commercial communication. English lexical units were frequently integrated into Uzbek and Russian texts to create a modern and internationally oriented image. Such practices were especially visible in beauty salons, restaurants, technology stores, and entertainment centers.

The statistical distribution of languages indicates that multilingualism has become a stable feature of Uzbekistan's urban environment, where different languages perform distinct communicative and symbolic functions.

### **Discussion**

The findings demonstrate that multilingualism has become an essential feature of Uzbekistan's urban environment. The dominant use of Uzbek reflects its strengthened position as the state language and an important marker of national identity [13]. At the same time, Russian continues to play a significant communicative role in business and everyday urban interaction.

The increasing visibility of English in advertisements and commercial signage indicates the influence of globalization and international culture [14]. In most cases, English performs a symbolic function associated with prestige, modernity, and economic development.

The coexistence of Uzbek, Russian, and English in public communication shows that multilingualism in Uzbekistan is characterized by functional distribution rather than direct language competition. Different languages are used according to social context and communicative needs.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the language situation and the implementation of multilingualism

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<sup>13</sup> Mahmudov N. Til va jamiyat munosabatlari. — Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Shohamy E., Gorter D. Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery. — New York: Routledge, 2009.





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in the urban environment of Uzbekistan. The findings revealed that Uzbek, Russian, and English perform different communicative and sociolinguistic functions within urban space. Uzbek dominates official communication, Russian remains important in everyday and commercial interaction, while English is mainly associated with globalization and prestige.

The research also demonstrated that multilingual practices and mixed-language signage have become common features of urban communication. These patterns reflect ongoing social, cultural, and economic changes in contemporary Uzbekistan.

Overall, the urban language situation in Uzbekistan represents a dynamic multilingual system shaped by language policy, globalization, and the communicative needs of modern society.

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