



Review Article

Educational Evolution and Linguistic Legacy of Afghan Uzbeks

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ABSTRACT



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This article examines the historical existence of Turkic populations in Afghanistan, emphasizing the enduring settlement of the Uzbek populations in the nation and their ancestral roots. Furthermore, it highlights the fact that the Afghan Uzbeks persist in utilizing their indigenous language for verbal interaction up to the present time. Over time, the importance of villages, mosques, Mullahkhanas, and madrasas has shaped the growth of traditional teachings in Afghanistan. Moreover, these Mullahkhanas and madrasas function as forums for the development of prose and poetry in Uzbek and Persian languages. Integrating books into education across all fields of study holds significant importance. This page provides details about the development of authorized educational institutions, commonly referred to as "home schools," during the rule of Amanullah Khan. Amanullah Khan established schools in various locations, with a special focus on rural areas, and provided comprehensive information about each school.

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1. Introduction

The Uzbeks, who make up the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan, speak both Uzbek and Dari. They belong to one of the nation's largest Turkic tribes. There are more than nine provinces where Afghan Uzbeks may be found, while the most of them live in the provinces of Kunduz, Balkh, Sheberghan, Takhor, and Maymana as well as the Pamir Mountains in Badkhis province. This area, once known as Turkestan, is home to the Uzbek people (Juwzjani, 2021). There were 16 million people living in Afghanistan in the 1970s, with 2 million being Uzbeks. There are currently around 30 million people living in Afghanistan, of which 3 to 7 million are thought to be Uzbek. The main reason for the lack of accurate information about the Uzbek population in Afghanistan is that there hasn't been a population registry for the last 40 years. In addition, the war has forced the Afghan people to relocate on a regular basis. The achievements of Turkish literature and art can be traced back to the fourth and eighth centuries AD, based on an examination of its historical basis. An example of an antiquated written letter is the Urhun-Enasai, also known as the Rumi letter. Later on, books began to be produced in Uyghur script and written in Turkish (Yarqin, 1984). These pieces were continuously altered till Shahrukh Mirza's reign. Arabic script was subsequently developed, and a substantial body of literature was written in it. During the Shaibani and Ashtarkhani periods, the Balkh region was ruled by Uzbek viceroys (Wikipedia contributors, 2024).

The Uzbeks make up the bulk of the local population. The Balkh region expanded quickly during this time, becoming a well-known center for science and producing a large body of literary, geographical, and historical writings (Azad & Kennedy, 2018). When Uzbeks go abroad, they learn the script used there. Uzbeks write in Arabic in Afghanistan, Latin in Turkey, and Cyrillic and Latin in Uzbekistan, among other languages (Schweitzer, 2019). Turkish is the language from which most Uzbek terminology originates. You will therefore find it easier to read and understand a book that was published in Uzbekistan if it is translated into Arabic (Kuhkan, 2020). It has been observed that Pashtun and Persian in Afghanistan have taken up vocabulary from Uzbekistan. Tukma, Surma, Chobuk, Chakma, Yayloq, Qishq, Sangolokh, Kaymak, Achar, Kachi, Kocha, Boja, and so on are some of these terminologies (Bakhtyorovna & Qadiri, 2023). It's unclear how many Uzbek terms are used, despite the fact that they are often used. Although there are clear parallels between the languages of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, there are also some notable differences. While loanwords from Russia are used in Uzbekistan, the vocabulary of the Uzbek language used in Afghanistan is derived from Arabic and Persian. There is a difference, and the only field qualified to address this topic is language research. There are many different dialects of Uzbek, much like any other language. About 25 tribes in Afghanistan speak Uzbek as their primary language, according to historians (Bakhtyorovna & Qadiri, 2023). Muhammad Halim Yorkin divided the Uzbek languages spoken

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in Afghanistan into two main groups: the (j) dialects and the (y) dialects. The inhabitants are from Andhui, Javuzjan, Maymana, and other regions of Afghanistan (Yarqin, 1984).

2. Cultural legacy

According to its long history, Afghanistan is the ancient and historical homeland of the Turkic peoples. Basically, before the political and geographical region of Afghanistan emerged, Turkic dynasties lived and ruled in this country for many years. The Sakas, Massagets, Huns, Kushans, and later the Hephtals, who lived in BC, created a great culture and left an indelible mark on themselves. These groups included the Ratbal kingdoms, Kabul kingdoms, Karakhanids, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Turkic Mongols, Kharazmshahs, Timurids, Baburis and their descendants, Shaibanis, Safavids, Afsharis, Ashtarkhanis, and finally the Khanates of southern Turkestan, including Khulum. Khanat, Balkh Khanat, Akcha Khanat, Sarpul Khanat, Shibirgan Khanat, Andhoi Khanat, and Maimana Khanat ruled as political dynasties (Yarqin, 1984). The khans of South Turkestan's happiness did not run out; rather, they left the battlefield, unable to withstand the attacks of the Afghan invaders. People of Turkic origin still make up the population that crossed these passes today. Uzbeks, People of Turkic origin include Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kyrgyz, Afshors, Qizilbash, Ayamaks, Hazaras, Timurids, Shaibanis, Paket, and Afghanized Turkic peoples such as Gori, Feruzkohi, Jamshidi, Taymani, Char Aymaq, Khilich, among the social situation during these ethnic periods forced them to speak Pashtu and Dari. Among them, only Uzbeks, Turkmens, and Kyrgyz were able to preserve the ability to speak and write in their own languages. There are many Turkic countries in this country that have completely lost their identity and become Afghan and Tajik. Ethnologists should conduct scientific studies and research on their history and identity. For example, the largest part of the Gurban Turks, located in the mountainous region of the Farwan province of Afghanistan, has already lost their mother tongue, and the rest are also experiencing this process. The Hazaras of Afghanistan, who are considered Turkic peoples, are a clear example of a people who have completely lost their historical language; today, they speak a special dialect, Farsi-Dari. The Hazara language has also preserved a significant number of Turkic words (Akyuz, 2021).

In the course of history, there have been various forms of oppressing ethnic groups, depriving them of their identity. For instance, approximately a century ago, the deportation of a group of Uzbeks from the capital Kabul and the Northern Kunduz region to the southern Hilmand region of Afghanistan aimed to acculturate them to Pashto and Dari. They were forced to talk. The Uzbeks who settled in those parts also experienced the process of Tajikization. However, in spite of all this, the local Uzbeks did not forget to speak their native language, even if they fell down. However, due to the oppressive nature of the Afghan government, the issues and problems affecting the Turkic peoples of Afghanistan remain hidden and unspoken. These hidden topics should be studied. However, Afghanistan's history does not date back many years. According to clear history, in 1747, Ahmad Shah Abdali united the Pashtun clan and began to pursue an independent policy; that is, after the death of Nadir Afshar, the power passed to the Durrani. The claim that Durrani Ahmad Shah declared the state of Afghanistan is controversial, as the Russians and the British determined the country's borders much later (Juwzjani, 2021). This history indicates that the formation of the country took place during these periods. South Turkestan was not part of Afghanistan's territory at that time. Eventually, following numerous challenges, Afghanistan incorporated South Turkestan into its territory. We know that the establishment of Afghan rule necessitated the expulsion of both a small and large number of Uzbeks from the country. The invading Pashtuns could not

destroy the Uzbeks, even though they committed many atrocities and evils. Despite the calamities that befell it, the Uzbek language remained the people's favorite language, carrying the traditions of folk oral creativity. The Turkic people in Afghanistan, from Badakhshan to Herat, have preserved the Uzbek language. The Uzbek language lived as a textless language without the formation of written speech. The reason why we call it textless is that they managed to preserve their language until today, only at the level of live communication. Those who attended schools, madrasas, and other educational institutions were unaware of the protection of the Uzbek language, which ultimately led to its destruction.

The condition of the northern provinces of Afghanistan seriously worsened after the Afghan rulers' conquest. Due to a lack of literacy and education, the Uzbek language suffered humiliation and became an everyday household language at the household and village level. The education system taught generations of Uzbeks in Dari and Pashto languages, rather than their mother tongue. Uzbeks no longer have the right to speak Uzbek in government offices and schools. The school office even fined Uzbek teachers on days when they spoke Uzbek. Uzbek writers often wrote in Persian. Press and book publishers forbade the publication of Uzbek poetry. During these years, Uzbeks continued to read the books of Navoi, Mashrab, and Yassavi. Imams in mosques and villages where Uzbeks live also privately taught the books of Sufi Allahyar and Huvaida, Ibrahim Adham, and others (Juwzjani, 2021).

3. Educational Efforts and Language Preservation

The Uzbeks of Afghanistan have preserved their mother tongue in their everyday lives and environments. The main evidence for preserving their mother tongue is that ethnic Uzbeks live densely in the northern regions of Afghanistan, especially in Foryab and Takhor, as well as in Badakhshan, Samangan, Kunduz, Sarpul, Baghlan, Balkh, Juzjjan, Badghiz, and Herat (Bakhtyorovna & Qadiri, 2023). A certain part of those regions consists of Uzbeks. In these regions' villages, the Uzbek language has remained pure. It is correct to say that the reason for this is the people's illiteracy, as well as the thick and dense presence of Uzbeks in these regions. But after a long time, the process of drastic changes in the Uzbek language strengthened the influence of the Dari language on the Uzbek language due to the urbanization of the Uzbeks and the establishment of trade and relations with other peoples. These changes and connections did not lead to the development of the Uzbek language, but rather to its destruction. In the center of a number of cities where Uzbeks live, the Dari language is the language of communication for the entire population, so it has had a significant impact on the language of the Uzbeks living in such places. As a result, many Persian words entered the Afghan Uzbek language and had a negative impact on it. Even the most educated Uzbeks adhere to the Persian language's rules when speaking Uzbek. It is very sad that most of the time; the literate Uzbeks use only one Uzbek verb at the end of their sentences. People may encounter this situation due to the limited number of Uzbek-speaking radio and television stations, the non-Uzbek nature of these programs, and the absence of Uzbek as the official language of state organizations.

Afghanistan has not significantly impacted the Uzbek language historically or socially. Because ethnic Uzbeks do not live in close proximity to Pashtuns, although they live closely with them in some regions, the Uzbek people did not show interest in learning this language, as the Pashto language was not the language of communication across the country and among different peoples. Finally, we understand that the following significant factors contributed to the Uzbek language's lack of development in this context:

The governors of Afghanistan have long discriminated against the Uzbek language, are debating it, and forbid speakers from working on it (Aamaj News, 2024). For centuries, Uzbek descendants have been denied the right to education and study in their mother tongue. The Uzbek people of Afghanistan did not receive any samples of Uzbek classical literature. The fact that the Uzbeks of Afghanistan and the Uzbeks of the world, especially the Uzbeks of the world, lived separately from their compatriots from Uzbekistan for almost a century and did not come and go between them at all means that the two nations living on both sides of the Amudarya are forced to be strangers to each other (Ibrahim, 2013). Furthermore, it can be stated that they were brought to the point where they did not understand each other's language. Basically, the reason for the occurrence of this situation may be the state's attention to this language, but the differences. These pressures and threats from the governments of that time caused the Uzbek people's love and affection for their native language to decrease. It is correct to say that these people's irresponsibility for their language does a great deal of harm to the Uzbek language.

However, despite various pressures and problems, the Uzbeks from Afghanistan, who live densely and thickly in the villages, preserve the dialects of the Uzbek language in their regions, especially in their families. The regions where Uzbeks live are home to the important main dialects of the Uzbek language of Afghanistan, namely Qarluq, Oghuz, and Kipchak. Uzbeks who speak the Qarluq dialect live in most of the northern regions of Afghanistan, including Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Balkh, Juzijan, Sarpul, Faryab, Badghiz, and Herat. The majority of Uzbeks speaking the Kipchak dialect reside in Kunduz, Takhor, Samangan, and partially in Sarpul. Also, Uzbeks who use the Oghuz dialect make up a part of the local population in the regions of the Juzijan region and Andkhoy district of the Faryab region. In some parts of the regions where people live in Afghanistan, there are significant differences in the dialects of the residents of one village and another. This phenomenon demonstrates the preservation of the Uzbeks' dialects in Afghanistan, highlighting the richness of their language. In addition, it is not wrong to say that Afghanistan is an unexplored reserve of Uzbek dialects. Nobody has done any work or conducted any research in this part of the Uzbek people's world. Language experts conduct research in this field (Kuhkan, 2020). According to the article "Vocabulary of Uzbek dialects in Afghanistan" by Nariman Abdullayev, "The Uzbek dialects spread in the northern and western regions of Afghanistan, and the vocabulary is extremely complex and varied." In these dialects, which are related to the original Turkic root, the word terms from the local Dari language, in addition to the vocabulary that forms the basis of other languages, hold a significant position. It is necessary to note another important feature of the Uzbek dialect vocabulary here. In addition to these layers, there are also words and terms borrowed from English and French." But our two new young researchers, Bashir Ahmed Qardash and Muhammad Alim Erkin, completed their master's thesis by researching the Uzbek dialects of Takhar and examining the Uzbek dialects of Afghanistan in general (Abdullayev, 1978). Muhammad Alim Erkin's research asserts that the incomplete and comprehensive study of the Uzbek dialects in Afghanistan hinders clear thinking. But regardless of this, according to Professor Palwan, a doctor of philology at the level of Uzbek language dialectology, there are Kipchak dialects of the Uzbek language in Afghanistan. Balta Jorayev, one of the great dialectologists of the Uzbek language, commented on the Kipchak dialect and wrote: "There are many dialects belonging to this dialect in northern Afghanistan. On this basis, the Kipchak dialect in Afghanistan often includes the dialects of the Uzbek people living in the northern and northeastern regions. Most of the speakers of this dialect are from Takhar, Kunduz,

Baghlan, Samangan, Sarpul, and partially several districts of Faryab and Juzijan provinces in Afghanistan's north and northeast. The Takhar region, which includes six districts and houses 70% of the Uzbek population, is one of Afghanistan's north-eastern regions. Taliqan, the center of Takhar region and its districts, frequently hosts representatives of these dialects, and the majority of the Kunduz region's population also speaks this dialect. Also, all the Uzbek people in the Samangan region located in the north of Afghanistan, as well as a small number of Kipchaks in Mazar-e Sharif, Koshtepa district of Juzijan province, Sozmakala and Kohistanat districts of Sarpul region, and Sholgara and Charkent districts of Mazar-e Sharif—representatives of the dialect—are still alive" (Erkin, 2021). Our researcher Bashir Ahmad Qardash gave general information about the dialects of Afghanistan in his scientific work and commented as follows: "After these literary, cultural, political, and social changes, how much work has been done on the Uzbek language? Countries of knowledge opened departments dedicated to Uzbek language study. Later, the teachers who began to work in educational institutions started some scientific and research work on the Uzbek language and literature, and intellectuals living in different regions began to develop the Uzbek language and literature. The scientific work "Lexical Features of the Sarpul Uzbek Dialect in Afghanistan" described the Uzbek Kipchak dialect in the Sarpul region in 1984. Najibullah Akbari, who took the first step to the study of Uzbek dialects and received a master's degree from educational institutions in Turkey, received a diploma in 2011 at the Ghazi educational institution under the name "The dialect of Khojayighar district of Takhar region, Afghanistan." protected by writing. In this case, in 2012 Hamidullah Tadash wrote a dissertation at Ankara University of Turkey, "Dialect of Imam Sahib district of Kunduz region," in order to investigate the phonetic characteristics of Uzbek language dialects from a scientific point of view and to reveal all their beauties. In recent years, Bashir Ahmed Qardash defended the dissertation in 2021 by conducting scientific research under the name "Morphological construction of Takhar Uzbek dialects (Qardash, 2021). Based on the aforementioned topics, the Uzbek language has been a part of the country's history since ancient times, and its speakers have actively preserved it through their dialect and vocabulary. Let's take a look at the steps that lead to survival.

A major factor in the preservation of the Uzbek language in Afghanistan is the focus of a number of people on their mother tongue and the presence of home schools in the villages. In a general sense, they say "Mullakhana." They also divided the "Mullakhanas" into two sections: one for the girls and another for the boys. For a deeper study of the topic, if we refer to the book "Teaching and Learning in Home Schools in Jawzjan and Sarpul" by the researcher Muhammad Halim Yarqin, he amazingly introduces the following truths: the people always observed those rules; boys were taught in the mosque rooms by the mosque imam. The students called their teacher "Akhund." Girls were taught by women. The girls also referred to their teachers as "BibiAtin and BibiKhatun

Students used to read other books to strengthen their knowledge. Especially in Sarpul, Juzijan, Foryob, and other regions where the majority of Uzbeks live, "Mullakhona" students learn and strengthen the Uzbek language with the encouragement of their families. and epics and stories written in prose, such as those by Fuzuli, Mashrab Namangani, Amiri, and Ibn-eYamin, commonly known as Mulla Aka, Sufi Allalhyar, Gulandan, Tuhfat-ul-Abidin, BibiMushkulkusha, and others (Yarqin, 1984). Many Uzbeks learn Uzbek in their families; in addition to the books mentioned above, they also

study Kharazmi's "Muhabbatnama," "Gulva Nawruz," and other similar books. Despite facing numerous negative situations, the country has managed to preserve the Uzbek language in its entirety. However, as time passes, schools adapt to new subjects, homeschooling disappears, and textbooks in today's mosques and madrasas undergo changes, with Arabic jurisprudence books replacing the old Persian and Uzbek ones (Yarqin, 1984). Our discussion on this topic focuses on Afghan Uzbeks' domestic lives. Everyone knows that Uzbeks have lived in Afghanistan since time immemorial, in the vast area from Faryab to Badakhshan. However, due to various socio-political factors, the Uzbek language in these regions has remained at the level of a colloquial language. As a result, these are the reasons and factors that contribute to the survival of the Uzbek language in families and villages throughout Afghanistan. (Sotoda, 2019) Here, we explained as much as possible the historical processes that took place among the Uzbek people, the initiatives of the common people, and the activities of the Mullokhanas. Of course, this topic is considered a very important one for the department of linguistics.

4. Conclusion

The presence of Turkic peoples in Afghanistan since ancient times is a clear issue in the country's history. Therefore, in the article, we examined the oral speech of the Uzbeks of Afghanistan and explained sufficiently about the history of the Uzbek people living in Afghanistan. Naturally, the selection and investigation of this subject stem from the revelation that the Uzbeks have been a part of Afghanistan's history since ancient times, and they have been diligently preserving their language alongside other languages in their homelands for an extended period. It has been studied. And this subject itself is very important for social linguistics.

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