

Bukhara's Linguistic Mosaic: Unraveling Bilingual Dynamics

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Abstract

This study delves into the bilingualism dynamics in Bukhara, focusing on the interaction between Tajik and Uzbek languages. Drawing from multidisciplinary perspectives encompassing linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and education, the research examines the reasons behind bilingual interactions and their impact on language proficiency. Utilizing social networks and surveying 10,000 individuals across various Bukhara districts, the study uncovers a complex linguistic landscape. Findings reveal a prevalence of bilingualism, with Tajik predominantly spoken at home and Uzbek in public settings, highlighting familial influences on language acquisition. Notably, certain districts exhibit a leaning towards monolingualism in Uzbek. These insights underscore the intricate interplay of linguistic, cultural, and societal factors shaping language dynamics in Bukhara, urging further investigation into their profound implications on language development and identity within diverse communities.

Keywords: bilingualism, cultural influences, language dynamics, cognitive benefits, multicultural societies

Introduction

Many researchers have been interested in looking at the bilingualism and define the concept of the bilingualism. Bilingualism is a product of extensive language contact (i.e., contacts between people who speak different languages). There are many reasons for speakers of different languages to get into contact with one another (Li, 2006). Bilingualism is defined as a speaker's ability to use two languages for communication. Due to the complexity of its nature, the study of bilingualism relies on several fields within linguistics, anthropology, psychology, neuroscience, and education. The study of bilingualism describes language behaviors of bilingual speakers, social and pragmatic patterns of using two languages, language development, and acquisition and loss, among other issues (Verplaetse & Schmitt, 2010). Romaine defines the concepts of bilingualism and multilingualism are a normal and unremarkable necessity of everyday life for the majority of the world's population. In today's world, bilingualism has become a prevalent phenomenon, with a majority of the global population growing up speaking and using two or more languages. This is particularly evident in Bukhara, where the population across different districts exhibits varying levels of bilingualism, monolingualism, and multilingualism. While most individuals in Bukhara are

adopt at speaking both Tajik and Uzbek languages, there are pockets within the region where monolingualism in Uzbek is dominant (Hamid, 2023).

Despite the complexities, the advantages of bilingualism have been extensively documented. Proficiency in multiple languages not only fosters an open-minded and broad-minded outlook but also enhances cognitive capabilities, such as the ability to learn new languages.

The societal implications of bilingualism in Bukhara are also of considerable interest. This includes assessing the extent of bilingualism across the districts and analyzing the social benefits it engenders. Furthermore, it involves exploring the differences between bilingual and monolingual individuals and elucidating the challenges associated with bilingualism across different age groups. In conclusion, the prevalence of bilingualism in Bukhara underscores the complexities and opportunities associated with multilingual societies. Despite the challenges, the advantages of bilingual proficiency are evident in fostering cognitive development and broadening societal perspectives, ultimately contributing to a more diverse and enriched community.

1. The history of Tajik language

The Tajik language, also known as Tajiki or Tadjik, is a variant of the Persian language spoken in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as by ethnic Tajiks in other countries. Its history is closely tied to the historical and cultural developments of the region.

Tajik, as a variant of Persian, has its roots in the ancient Persian language, which was widely spoken in a vast region that included present-day Iran, Central Asia, and parts of South Asia. Over time, the language evolved and developed as it came into contact with other regional languages and cultures (Nasrullo, 1930). The modern Tajik language began to take shape during the Islamic Samanid Empire (819–999 AD), which was centered in the region of present-day Tajikistan and north-eastern Iran. The Samanid dynasty played a key role in the spread and development of Persian language and culture in the region. Today, the Tajik language is the official language of Tajikistan and is written using a version of the Cyrillic script. However, in 1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there has been a growing movement to reintroduce the use of the Persian-Arabic script for writing Tajik, as well as to strengthen cultural and linguistic ties with Persian-speaking countries (Azim & John, 2004). The history of the Tajik language reflects a complex interplay of cultural, political, and historical forces that have shaped its development over the centuries.

Sadriddin Ayni, a prominent figure in Tajik literature, made significant contributions to the development of the Tajik language and literature. Ayni's extensive literary works, including novels, short stories, essays, and translations, not only enriched Tajik literature but also contributed to the standardization and purification of the language. His writings often reflected social and historical themes, depicting the life, struggles, and aspirations of the Tajik people. Through his literary works, Ayni played a crucial role in preserving and promoting Tajik cultural heritage. By incorporating folk tales, traditions, and historical narratives into his writings, he helped in the preservation and propagation of Tajik cultural identity and language.

The use of the Tajik language in Bukhara is a topic that has been debated in terms of whether it should be considered a distinct language or a dialect. Historically, the Tajik language spoken in Bukhara has been characterized by its unique phonetic, lexical, and grammatical features which set it apart from other regional varieties. The status of the Tajik language in Bukhara is a complex issue, with both linguistic and cultural implications (Brown, 2006). While some scholars argue that the language spoken in Bukhara represents a distinct dialect, others assert that it should be recognized and valued as a unique and important variation of the Tajik language. The perspectives of [Ayni](#) and [Rudaki](#) shed light on the significance of acknowledging and celebrating

the linguistic diversity present within the broader Tajik language landscape, reflecting the rich tapestry of regional variations and their impact on Tajik literature and identity (Hyle, 2022).

Overall, Sadriddin Ayni's contributions in Tajik language and literature have had a lasting impact on the language's development, standardization, and recognition as a symbol of national identity and cultural heritage.

Methodology

Based on the analysis of the authors, this study employs the use of social networks to gather information from a diverse group of individuals. The intended sample size of 10,000 people from various districts was achieved through direct communication with participants. The study implemented a multi-stage process, beginning with the creation of a two-question poll regarding proficiency in Uzbek and Tajik languages. Subsequently, responses were collected both online and offline. Finally, the research team utilized the gathered information to determine the number of bilingual individuals within Bukhara and its surrounding districts (Jahon, 2017).

Data was acquired through the process of engaging and communicating with individuals, with the collected poll responses serving as the primary dataset. The poll comprises two key questions, seeking information on participants' language proficiency and their respective districts of origin:

1. What is your proficiency level in Uzbek and Tajik languages?
2. In which district of Bukhara do you live?

Additionally, we conducted a quiz involving approximately 30 participants, all aged between 20 and 30, as outlined in the article. This quiz not only exemplified the active engagement of a significant cohort of young adults but also underlined their contribution to the research, offering valuable insights from a demographic known for its dynamic perspectives and evolving societal roles.

Results and discussion

The study conducted in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, revealed intriguing insights into language usage patterns and bilingualism. Data collected through polls shows that in certain districts, the majority of the population uses the Tajik language, such as in Rometan, Shofirkon, and Peshku, as well as in Bukhara city. However, in most of the population, Uzbek language, such as in Qorakol, Olot, and Jondor was preferred due to its widespread usage in both written and spoken forms. This indicates that both Tajik and Uzbek speakers coexist in these areas. The polls were given in the [channel](#) which is named “Bukharians” with more than 55000 followers.

The text explores a fascinating social phenomenon where, despite being raised in families where Tajik is the dominant language, some children are unable to speak Tajik due to the influence of Uzbek family members in their community. As a result, they are able to comprehend the language but are unable to express themselves in it. This sheds light on the complex dynamics of language and identity within multicultural societies, showcasing how familial and societal influences can shape an individual's linguistic abilities.

Such a revelation highlights the intricate and often overlooked nuances of language acquisition and usage within diverse communities, prompting further exploration and consideration of the impact of cultural and familial factors on language development.

The districts of Qorako'l and Olot displayed lower rates of bilingualism compared to Jondor, while Rometan, Peshku, Shofirkon, and Galaosiyo had a majority of residents who identified as Tajik speakers, yet utilized Uzbek in daily speech. These individuals were also considered bilingual. The linguistic features of the Olot district dialect in Bukhara offer fascinating insights into the local culture. Some words related to the dialect of Olot district. These words were selected from the dialect of Olot district of Bukhara. Olot borders with the Republic of Turkmenistan and Khorezm region. Therefore, the inhabitants mostly speak a language close to the Oghuz dialect (Gloria, 2023).

Notably, the city of Bukhara emerged as a stronghold of Tajik language usage, with a significant proportion of the population conversing primarily in Tajik, especially within family, friend, and relative interactions. However, when engaging with new acquaintances, the preference was for the use of Uzbek.

In addition, people in Bukhara might underestimate others as "villagers" simply because they may not speak the specific Tajik dialect can reinforce negative biases and lead to misunderstandings (Kilichev, 2023).

Figure 1: Percentages of the participants

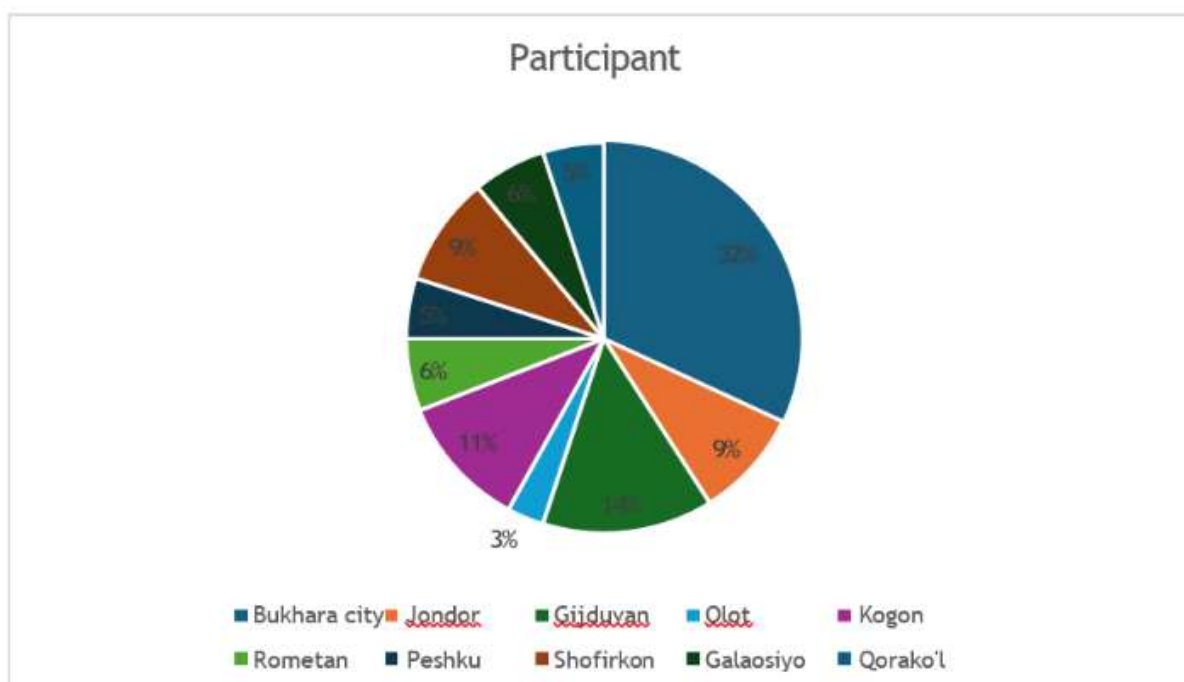
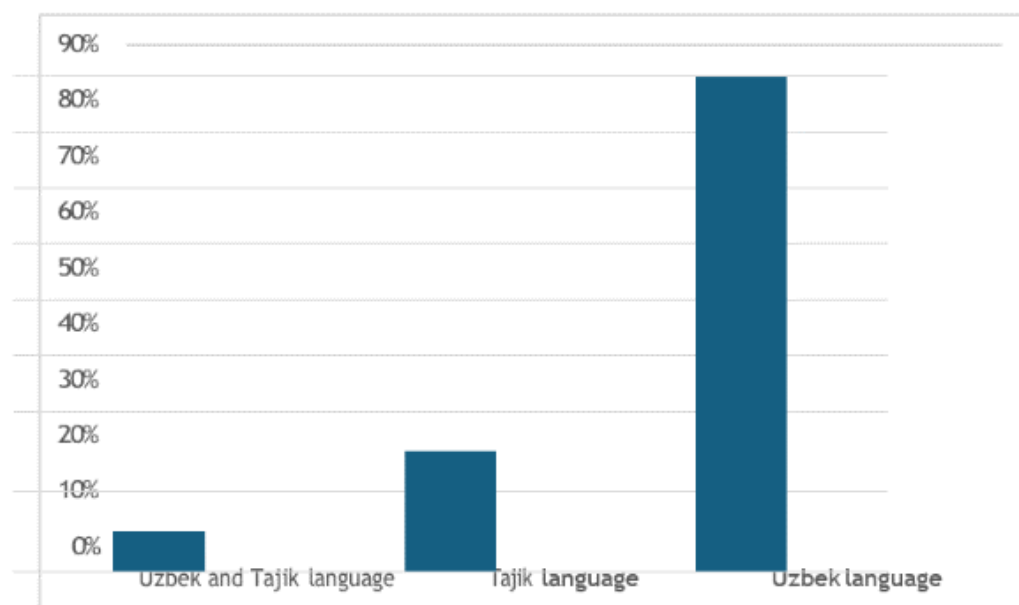
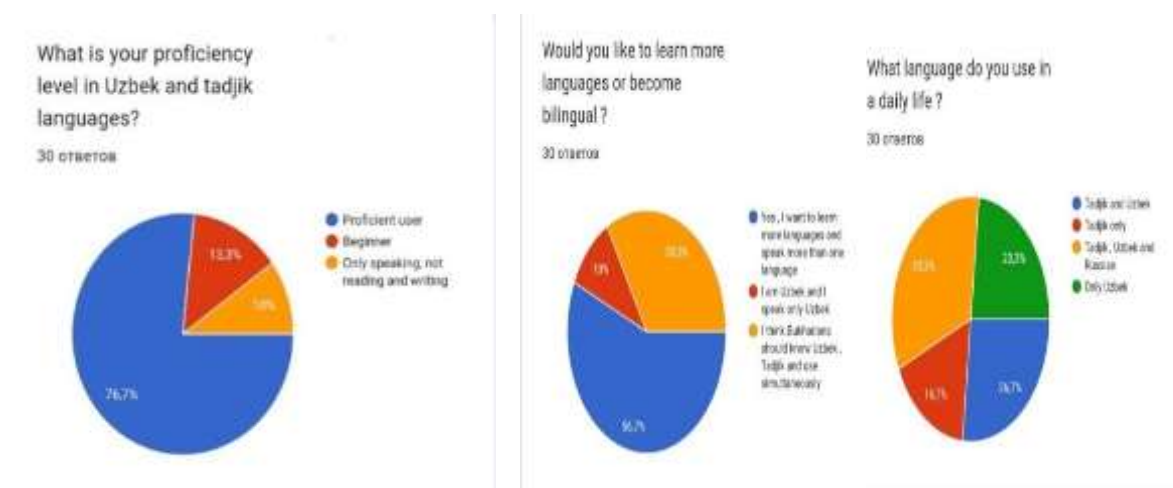


Figure 2: Percentage of language users



According to the survey, the usage of the Uzbek language stands at 80%, while the Tajik language is at 14%, with only 6% of respondents using both languages. The poll reveals that the districts of Bukhara predominantly utilize the Uzbek language. However, personal interactions demonstrate that the Tajik language is more prevalent in Bukhara city compared to certain districts. The Tajik language is primarily spoken in Bukhara, as it is not a written language. In contrast, Uzbek is both written and spoken, which is why it was the preferred choice of language in the poll for most participants spoken, which is why it was the preferred choice of language in the poll for most participants (Tashakori, 2020).

Figure 3 : Survey choice of language



The initial quiz results reveal that the majority of participants are proficient in both Tajik and Uzbek languages. A mere 13.3 percent of participants are classified as beginners, while 10 percent exclusively speak these languages without utilizing them for reading and writing. These findings highlight the diverse linguistic competencies within the surveyed group and indicate a significant portion of individuals who possess language skills but may not engage with them extensively in written form.

In the second quiz, the data indicates a strong inclination towards a desire to learn and speak multiple languages. Over 30 percent of participants identify themselves as Uzbek speakers, while 10 percent believe it is sufficient to be proficient solely in Uzbek and Tajik. These insights underscore both the enthusiasm for multilingualism and the recognition of the values associated with mastering diverse languages within the surveyed group. In the latest quiz, it's evident that Tajik, Uzbek, and Russian speakers represent the highest percentage of daily language users. Together, Tajik, Uzbek, and Russian speakers make up more than 20 percent of the respondents, clearly showing the prevalence of these languages in the daily lives of the participants.

Indeed, Bukhara, a historically rich city in Uzbekistan, boasts a diverse linguistic landscape. In addition to the prevalent Uzbek and Tajik speakers, the city is also home to a significant population of Russian speakers, reflecting the influence of the former Soviet Union. This linguistic diversity adds vibrancy to the cultural tapestry of Bukhara, effectively encapsulating its long history of trade, exchange, and coexistence among different communities. Moreover, the prevalence of English proficiency among the younger generation further underscores Bukhara's position within a rapidly evolving global context. This highlights the city's adaptability and open attitude toward embracing international languages, facilitating intercultural communication and fostering connections with the broader world. The multilingual environment in Bukhara not only attests to its historical role as a melting pot of cultures and languages, but also enhances its potential as a welcoming destination for global visitors, thereby contributing to its position as a hub of cultural exchange and understanding. (UNESCO, 2016)

The presence of a dedicated Tajik faculty within Bukhara University not only underscores the city's recognition of the significance of preserving and promoting the Tajik language and culture within the academic sphere but also reflects its dedication to fostering an environment where Tajik students can engage deeply with their linguistic and cultural heritage at a scholarly level. (Tyler, 2023)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research on bilingualism in Bukhara provides an elaborate understanding of language dynamics within this cultural setting. The survey results, particularly in educational settings, reveal a fascinating aspect of linguistic diversity among elementary school children. The educational sphere reflects the broader linguistic situation, where the coexistence of Tajik and Uzbek speakers poses challenges and opportunities. In some districts, like Qorako'l and Olot, lower rates of bilingualism are observed compared to the more linguistically diverse Jondor. This variation underscores the localized nature of language patterns, influenced by historical, cultural, and geographical factors. One striking observation examples are to the city of Bukhara itself, where Tajik is a dominant language within familial circles, but Uzbek takes precedence in interactions with new acquaintances. This complex interplay of language choices within different social contexts discloses the intricate negotiations individuals make in their daily lives, influenced by historical ties, cultural affiliations, and the practicalities of effective communication. Moreover, the challenges faced by elementary school teachers exemplify the

intricacies of bilingual education. The need to convey lessons in Tajik due to the varying language proficiency among students adds complexity to pedagogy. This highlights the importance of considering linguistic diversity in educational policies and practices to ensure equal learning opportunities for all students. As Bukhara navigates this linguistic variety, it is essential to recognize the evolving nature of language preferences. The survey results indicating a dominance of Uzbek language in certain districts, coupled with the interest in the Tajik, suggest a dynamic linguistic ecosystem shaped by historical legacies and contemporary influences. In essence, the research not only contributes to our understanding of bilingualism but also prompts reflection on the broader implications for education, cultural preservation, and identity in Bukhara. It emphasizes the need for customized approaches that account for the multilayered nature of language use, ensuring that linguistic diversity becomes a source of enrichment rather than a barrier within this dynamic community.

Originality Statement

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author[s] declare that this article was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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