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THE CONCEPT OF "TRANSITIONAL DIALECT" AS A SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM IN DIALECTOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes various approaches to the concept of "transitional dialect" in dialectology. Based on these analyses, conclusions are drawn regarding the theoretical and scientific aspects of transitional dialects included in the structure of Uzbek dialects.

KEYWORDS: *Transitional Dialect, Mixed Dialect, Language Union, Dialect Union, Uzbek Dialects, Living Language, Linguistic Features, Language Mass.*

The concepts of "transitional dialect" and "mixed dialect" have long existed in literature on linguistics, particularly in dialectology. In modern linguistics, the concept of a "language and dialect union" has also emerged. It is known that the "language and dialect union" is the result of linguistic contact. Every language and dialect does not develop in isolation, but interacts with neighboring languages and dialects. This interaction occurs at the boundaries between two languages or dialects. At such boundaries, transitional features appear in both languages or dialects [1].

In addition to studying the phonetic, lexical, and morphological characteristics of Uzbek dialects, Uzbek linguists have also examined the influence of surrounding dialects or languages based on geographical location. There are numerous scientific studies reflecting the interaction and variability of Uzbek dialects in lexical, phonetic, and morphological aspects.

Transitional or mixed dialects emerge as a result of mutual influence between two dialects or languages. These dialects retain features from the influencing dialect or language. From the perspective of linguistic features, it is impossible to assign them fully to either dialect, as none of their characteristics are preserved entirely [5]. For this reason, the term "transitional" implies a position between elements [2] and reflects the intermediate status of these dialects.

Several dialectologists have briefly mentioned the phenomenon of dialect interaction and mixing in their studies, often providing examples for how such dialects emerge. However, the terminology for this phenomenon has been largely overlooked. Some refer to them as mixed dialects, others as transitional dialects, and in some cases both terms are used interchangeably [3]. The term "transitional dialects" is used as a term in Tora Qudratov's dissertation *"Transitional Dialects of the Uzbek Language"* [6], in which he proposes that such dialects can emerge in different ways:

1. A dialect situated between two related languages due to their mutual influence;
2. A dialect located between two dialects of a single language as a result of their mutual influence [6].

This shows that distinctive features of the two interacting languages or dialects remain preserved. Before the time of dialectal or language mixing, some linguistic features existing in one system may disappear and be replaced by features from the neighboring system. Many grammatical, lexical, and phonetic features may coexist for a certain period. However, the usage of one feature may decline while the other becomes more dominant. Eventually, the less-used feature may fall out of use altogether. A mixed status may arise where two language or dialect masses converge. Therefore, such situations typically emerge at the borders between regions, such as provinces, districts, villages, or neighborhoods. This mixing is often caused by social interaction among communities.

In such cases, the features characteristic of the interacting dialects may not be uniformly present across all parts of the transitional dialect. The further a speaker is from one dialectal mass, the fewer features from that dialect they tend to exhibit, while features from the other dialect become more dominant, and vice versa. Thus, the "poles" of the transitional dialect lean toward the dialects with which they are in contact. As a result:

1. Transitional dialects emerge as a result of mutual influence between two dialects, occupying an intermediate position between them in terms of linguistic features.
2. For this reason, and based on the nature of their linguistic characteristics, such dialects cannot be fully classified under either of the dialects, as neither of the dialectal features is entirely preserved in them.

In his research, Tora Qudratov classifies transitional dialects of the Uzbek language that emerged at dialectal boundaries into two categories, based on which dialects mutually influenced each other:

1. Transitional dialects that emerged as a result of the influence of Karluk and Oghuz dialects on the Kipchak dialect;

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2. Transitional dialects that arose from the influence of the Karluk dialect on the Oghuz dialect.

Of course, this classification is based on the features of the dialects he studied. However, the issue of dialect mixing should also be reflected in the general classification of Uzbek dialects. This is because the development of society and advancements in science and technology have led to significant changes in our language, particularly in dialects. This naturally creates the need to revise the current dialect classification. So far, this issue—the matter of transitional dialects—has not been fully studied or systematically classified within the general framework of the Uzbek language. The presence of dialects in Uzbekistan that are losing their specific features due to the intermingling of speakers from two dialectal groups makes this issue even more relevant. Therefore, it is necessary to examine and clarify the matter within specific geographic regions.

Indeed, in the last century, many Uzbek and Russian scholars have approached this issue from different perspectives. For example, the prominent researcher of Uzbek dialects, E. Polivanov, noted in the 1930s that a local "Kazakh-Naiman" dialect spoken around Samarkand had developed certain features—such as the [ā] and [x] phonemes; the use of normal "i" in words like *it* and *bit*; the absence of diphthongization of vowels *e, ö, o*; and the use of accusative forms instead of genitive case—which were not found in other dialects like Qirq and Kipchak. Based on this, he classified (Andijan-Kokand) dialects, which include three broad vowels (ä, a, ā), as transitional dialects [4].

Similarly, linguists such as V. Reshetov, F. Abdullayev, and M. Mirzayev observed that in Kipchak dialects, certain phonemes and phonological-morphological rules began to fade or became less active under the influence of neighboring "j"-pronouncing dialects. V. Reshetov even identified a subgroup within the "ǯ"-pronouncing dialects, calling it the "transitional group" (переходная группа). He noted the following main features: the shift from ǯ to j, the reduction of diphthongs, the phonemic independence of consonants *x* and *q*, and the static use of normal "i" in words like *ijt* and *bijt*. He explained that these features emerged under the strong influence of "j"-pronouncing dialects and the literary language [7].

Likewise, M. Mirzayev pointed out that in the Kipchak dialects of Bukhara, features such as diphthongs (i)e, (u)o, (u)ö do not exist; the sound "h" does not appear at the beginning of words; personal pronouns in the dative case are used as *menga, senga* instead of *maɣan, saɣan*; and the present tense verb is formed with *-yap*, not *-ǯatir* [8].

According to I. Shamsiddinov, some Kipchak dialects in Khorezm and Bukhara are gradually losing features typical of the Kipchak group under the influence of neighboring Oghuz and Karluk dialects. He explains: "Some dialects of the Oghuz group in the Bukhara region are losing their features and increasingly resemble Karluk dialects. The development of Oghuz dialects in this area indicates a gradual retreat of Oghuz-specific features and a shift toward Karluk-type dialects. The Qorako'l dialect is considered one of the transitional 'past-form' dialects of the general Uzbek language" [9].

G. O. Yunusov also discusses transitional dialects, although he does not use this term explicitly. He describes how mutual social interactions and long historical-linguistic processes among speakers of two or more Uzbek dialects—or between Uzbek and Tajik, Uzbek and Turkmen, or Uzbek and Afghan languages—lead to the blending of dialectal features [10].

Professor Y. Ibrohimov, while analyzing Southern Aral Sea Uzbek dialects, gives special attention to the issue of transitional dialects [5]. In his research, he classifies transitional dialects into "internal" and "external" types. Internal transitional dialects emerge from the mutual influence between two dialects of the same language, whereas external ones result from the influence of dialects belonging to different (either related or unrelated) languages.

In conclusion, transitional dialects exist not only within the Uzbek dialectal system but also among dialects of related and unrelated languages. Scientific and technological progress, as well as socio-political shifts, inevitably influence dialects. As society evolves, so does language—it may progress or decline. The intermingling of peoples naturally leads to the blending of their languages, particularly their dialects. This process gives rise to transitional dialects that preserve features from multiple dialects. Studying such ever-evolving dialects—i.e., the living language of the people—remains a highly relevant and important endeavor for the science of all times.

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