

LEXICAL AND STYLISTIC FEATURES OF SOUTHERN UZBEK DIALECTS

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Annotation. This study analyzes lexical layers and stylistic devices in Southern Uzbek dialects with an emphasis on regionally marked vocabulary, semantic change, and discourse functions. Materials were collected from field recordings and dialect dictionaries and processed through comparative and functional methods. The novelty lies in correlating lexis with style across communicative situations and proposing criteria for differentiating dialectal units from colloquial variants.

Keywords. Southern Uzbek dialects; dialect lexicon; semantic shift; stylistic stratification; discourse pragmatics; phraseology; linguistic geography.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqotda Janubiy o'zbek shevalarining leksik qatlamlari va uslubiy vositalari mintaqaviy xususiyatga ega bo'lgan so'z boyligi, semantik o'zgarishlar hamda diskursdagi funksiyalari nuqtayi nazaridan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot materiallari dala yozuvlari va sheva lug'atlaridan to'planib, qiyosiy hamda funksional metodlar asosida qayta ishlangan. Tadqiqotning yangiligi leksik birliklarning uslub bilan turli kommunikativ vaziyatlar kesimida o'zaro bog'liqligini aniqlash, shuningdek, shevaga xos birliklarni so'zlashuv variantlaridan farqlash mezonlarini taklif etish bilan izohlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Janubiy o'zbek shevalari; sheva leksikasi; semantik siljish; uslubiy tabaqalanish; diskurs pragmatikasi; frazeologiya; lingvistik geografiya.

Аннотация. В работе исследуются лексические слои и стилистические особенности южноузбекских говоров с акцентом на регионально маркированную лексику, семантические сдвиги и дискурсивные функции. Материал собран по данным полевых записей и диалектных словарей и обработан сравнительно-сопоставительным и функциональным методами. Научная новизна заключается в соотношении лексики и стиля по коммуникативным ситуациям и критериях разграничения диалектизмов и разговорных вариантов.

Ключевые слова. диалектная лексика; семантический сдвиг; стилистический слой; дискурс; фразеология; лингвогеография.

Introduction. Southern Uzbek dialects may be defined as a set of territorially and socially conditioned varieties of Uzbek spoken primarily in the southern regions, where long-term contact with neighboring languages and internal migration have shaped a distinctive lexical profile and a recognizable stylistic register. The mechanism that produces this distinctiveness is the interaction of inherited Turkic vocabulary with contact-induced borrowing, local semantic innovation, and the stabilization of speech habits in repeated communicative routines such as market bargaining, kinship negotiations, and narrative performance. For example, everyday speech often preserves archaic pastoral and agricultural terms alongside newer urban and administrative items, and the same speaker may switch between a highly local lexeme in family talk and a more standard synonym in formal settings. Quantitatively, dialectological corpora and field transcriptions typically show that regionally marked lexical items can constitute roughly one tenth to one fifth of running tokens in spontaneous conversation, while their proportion drops sharply in monitored speech, a distribution consistent with classic observations on dialect leveling. Scientifically, this pattern supports the view that dialect lexis is not an isolated inventory

but a functional resource governed by audience design and by the speaker's awareness of normative pressure.

Literature review. Lexical stratification in Southern Uzbek dialects can be described as the coexistence of several layers, including common Turkic base words, Persian and Arabic cultural borrowings, Russian-era administrative and technological terms, and locally coined formations that index micro-regional identity. The mechanism of stratification is cumulative: older borrowings become nativized phonologically and morphologically, while newer borrowings remain stylistically salient and may compete with Uzbek-derived neologisms promoted by standardization. A clear example is the parallel availability of inherited and borrowed designations in domains such as household items, irrigation, and trade, where speakers choose between alternatives depending on setting, interlocutor, and pragmatic intent. In numeric terms, inventories compiled from dialect dictionaries for the southern zone often reveal several hundred to a few thousand items with explicit territorial marking, with borrowing rates varying by semantic domain, highest in administration and material culture and lower in kinship and basic verbs. From a scientific perspective, the layered lexicon is best interpreted via sociolinguistic diffusion models: the more a domain is exposed to supraregional institutions, the more likely it is to host borrowings and to display rapid stylistic re-evaluation.

A central lexical feature is semantic shift, defined as systematic change in meaning or usage conditions of a word within a dialect community relative to the standard language. The mechanism of semantic shift includes metaphorization, metonymy, narrowing, and pragmatic strengthening, often triggered by local material culture or by contact patterns that create new referential needs. For instance, a general Uzbek term may develop a specialized sense in a southern agrarian context, or a word associated with a tool may broaden to denote a whole activity, producing distinct collocational behavior. Empirically, semantic divergences are frequently detectable in elicitation tasks: informants provide definitions and usage contexts that diverge from dictionary norms, and in narrative data the same lexeme may co-occur with local collocates at rates noticeably higher than in standard corpora. Scientifically, these shifts confirm that dialect semantics is not merely "deviation" but an adaptive system whose categories align with local experience, and functional-semantic analysis becomes necessary to model meaning as situated practice rather than as a fixed lexical entry.

Word-formation in Southern Uzbek dialects can be defined as the set of morphological processes that create or modify lexemes, including suffixation, compounding, reduplication, and the use of expressive affixes. The mechanism behind dialectal productivity is the preference for transparent derivations that facilitate rapid naming in everyday contexts, alongside expressive morphology that marks evaluation, intimacy, or irony

Phraseology and idiomaticity constitute another lexical-stylistic domain, defined as relatively fixed multiword units whose meaning is partially non-compositional and whose use signals membership in a speech community. The mechanism of phraseological stabilization is repetition in culturally salient scripts such as greeting, condolence, advice, and humor, where formulaic language reduces processing effort and simultaneously conveys social stance. For example, local proverbs and idioms are inserted into narration to legitimize an evaluation or to soften a directive, and their dialectal phonetics and lexicon may remain stable even when speakers otherwise approximate standard pronunciation. In quantitative terms, narrative recordings regularly show higher densities of formulaic sequences than casual conversation, and proverb-like inserts may occur once every few minutes in elder storytelling, whereas they are sporadic among younger speakers. Scientifically, this confirms that dialect phraseology is an indexical system, and stylistic analysis must therefore incorporate pragmatic notions such as stance-taking, politeness, and evidentiality.

Stylistic stratification in Southern Uzbek dialects may be defined as the patterned distribution of linguistic choices across communicative contexts, including informal family talk, peer interaction, public negotiation, ritual speech, and semi-formal institutional communication. Scientifically, this demonstrates that dialect style is not random but governed by communicative economy and social meaning, and it aligns with variationist findings that style-shifting is a structured response to audience and topic.

Contact-induced lexical variation can be defined as the incorporation and adaptation of elements from neighboring languages and from historically influential lingua francas into the dialect vocabulary and stylistic repertoire. The mechanism includes borrowing, calquing, code-switching, and the development of hybrid constructions, with adaptation processes such as phonological nativization and morphological integration into Uzbek patterns. For example, borrowed nouns may acquire Uzbek case and possessive markers, and some borrowed verbs may be used via light-verb constructions, producing stable mixed collocations that speakers no longer perceive as foreign. Quantitatively, borrowing is uneven: institutional, commercial, and technological domains show higher proportions of loanwords, while core vocabulary remains largely Turkic, and in bilingual neighborhoods the rate of code-switching increases in peer talk compared to intergenerational conversation.

A comparative perspective is essential, defined here as systematic juxtaposition of Southern Uzbek dialect forms with northern and central varieties and with the codified standard to isolate areal innovations and shared archaisms. The mechanism of comparison relies on identifying correspondences in semantic fields, mapping isoglosses, and testing whether differences are lexical, semantic, or pragmatic, thereby avoiding the methodological error of treating every divergence as a separate lexeme. For example, two regions may share the same base word but differ in its preferred collocations and

politeness profile, which is a stylistic difference rather than a strictly lexical one, while another item may be geographically restricted and thus qualifies as a dialectal lexeme. In quantitative terms, dialect atlas approaches typically reveal clusters of features rather than single isolated traits, and isogloss bundles often coincide with historical settlement routes and trade corridors. Scientifically, this supports the principle that dialect features are patterned and historically interpretable, and it argues for integrating linguistic geography with discourse-based stylistics.

Discussion. The methodological apparatus of the present thesis is defined by the combination of fieldwork, lexicographic analysis, and contextual interpretation, ensuring that lexical items are not detached from their communicative ecology. The mechanism of data reliability includes triangulation: elicitation provides paradigmatic information, spontaneous recordings reveal actual usage, and dictionary sources supply historical attestations and variant spellings, all of which are cross-checked. For example, an item first identified in a word list is searched in narrative data to test its collocations, stylistic restrictions, and speaker distribution, and the analysis is then compared with published dialect descriptions to avoid idiosyncratic conclusions [1; 2]. Numerically, a balanced mini-corpus for a thesis-level study can consist of several hours of recordings and tens of thousands of running words, sufficient to compute relative frequencies of key markers and to detect stable co-occurrence patterns. Scientifically, such a design aligns with modern dialectology's shift from purely item-based inventories to corpus-supported generalizations about variation, function, and change.

In order to make the analysis operational, the thesis introduces a working distinction between dialectal units and colloquial variants, defined respectively as territorially anchored forms with stable local distribution and as informal forms that may circulate across regions without strict areal confinement. For example, a lexeme that appears across multiple regions only in youth slang is better treated as colloquial, while an item consistently reported and used by speakers across ages in a specific southern district suggests a dialectal status [3; 4].

Results. The results of the study can be synthesized as follows in a strictly academic conclusion. Southern Uzbek dialects display a multi-layered lexicon in which inherited vocabulary, contact borrowings, and locally productive derivations interact with genre and register to produce stable stylistic oppositions between intimate, performative, and monitored speech. Semantic shifts and phraseological routines reveal that meaning and style are co-constructed in discourse, and that dialectal forms function as resources for stance, solidarity, and pragmatic efficiency rather than as mere deviations from a standard.

Conclusion. A comparative and corpus-informed procedure allows for clearer differentiation of truly areal lexemes from broadly colloquial innovations, thereby strengthening the empirical basis for dialect classification. The thesis therefore contributes to Uzbek dialectology by linking lexical description to stylistic analysis and by offering

operational criteria that can be extended to other regional varieties within the Uzbek-speaking space.

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