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THE DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NORM AND USAGE IN SOCIAL NETWORK TEXTS (ON THE MATERIAL OF THE UZBEK LANGUAGE)

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ABSTRACT

The thesis addresses the relation between the codified literary norm and living usage, or uzus, in Uzbek language social network texts and argues that the two categories are not opposed static levels but interacting moments of one moving system. It shows, on concrete Uzbek examples, that usage supplies the material through which the norm is periodically renewed while the norm filters which part of usage it will legitimise, and that the speed of social network communication compresses this filtering process into a span short enough to be observed synchronically.

INTRODUCTION

The literary norm of the Uzbek language is the codified, socially sanctioned set of word forms and constructions fixed in dictionaries, grammars and style manuals, whereas usage, or uzus, is the regularity that actually governs the speech of the mass of native speakers at a given period, regardless of whether that regularity has received codified sanction [1]. Texts produced within social networks, being written quickly, read by a mass audience and rarely subjected to editorial control, have become the site where the relation between these two categories can be observed most directly, which makes the material an appropriate ground for reconsidering norm and usage not as two static, opposed levels but as a single system engaged in continuous internal movement.

MAIN PART

Norm and usage stand in a relation of dialectical interdependence rather than of simple opposition. On the one hand every act of usage is produced and evaluated against the background of an existing norm, so that a native speaker of Uzbek recognises a form such as obunaga yozilmoq or izoh bildirmoq as normative and a form such as komment qoldirmoq as a departure from it precisely because the norm supplies the standard of comparison. On the other hand a departure that repeats itself across a sufficiently wide community of speakers for a sufficiently long time ceases to be perceived as an isolated deviation and begins to press upon the codified norm from within usage itself, so that the norm is not an external authority standing outside the language but a stabilised layer that usage itself continually feeds and revises [3].

Material from Uzbek language social network texts illustrates both directions of this movement concretely. Words such as sayt, blog and onlayn entered public Uzbek usage first as unassimilated items confined to network communication and only later, once their frequency and social distribution had stabilised, were absorbed into the codified vocabulary reflected in current dictionaries and in edited publicistic writing, which shows usage acting as the source from which the norm is periodically renewed. At the same time forms such as krutoy, employed as an evaluative adjective in youth oriented chats and channel comments, remain confined to informal network usage after years of frequent occurrence and have not been admitted into the codified norm, which shows that repetition of

a form in usage is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for its codification and that the norm continues to act as a filter selecting which part of usage it will legitimise.

The specific conditions of social network communication accelerate the cycle through which this dialectic unfolds. Because a social network text is composed without the delay of editorial review and is exposed to an audience whose size and speed of reaction have no counterpart in the print genres for which the classical description of norm and usage was formulated, a form that in earlier periods needed decades to move from occasional usage into the codified norm now competes with the norm within a few years, and the direction this competition takes can in many cases be observed while it is still under way rather than reconstructed afterward from the history of the codified language [4].

CONCLUSION

The material examined here therefore supports the conclusion that norm and usage in social network texts do not form two separate systems but two interacting moments of a single, historically moving lexical and grammatical system: usage supplies the constant flow of variation, the norm filters and legitimises the part of that variation which stabilises across time and community, and the pace of social network communication compresses this filtering process into a span short enough to be studied synchronically rather than only through retrospective linguistic history [2].

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