

**ASSESSING THE PHENOMENA OF DIGLOSSIA AND LANGUAGE SHIFT**

(The Case of Sheberghan City, Afghanistan)

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In the field of sociolinguistics, language shift is often studied with diglossia to see the uses of two languages or high and low varieties of the same language. Under the purview of diglossia and language shift, this study aims to elicit the perception of Sheberghan speakers towards the use of Dari and Uzbek in different domains of life. To be more precise, the study observed the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in day to day life of the Sheberghan speakers. Using random sampling technique, 100 educated bilinguals were selected as representative sample and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and analytic induction. The findings of this research showed significant shift from Dari to Uzbek while prioritizing the use of language in daily paraphernalia of Sheberghan speech community.

Keywords: *Language Shift, Diglossia, Dari, Uzbek, Degree of Language Use*



1. INTRODUCTION

This study reviews two closely intertwined phenomena of diglossic situation and language shift in Sheberghan city from sociolinguistic perspective, where the majority of people are Uzbek and Dari speakers. In a speech community, when a language becomes dominant and replaces other languages, language shift takes place. The phenomenon of Language shift is often studied by some sociolinguists under review of diglossia. Diglossia is defined as condition in which two languages or two varieties of the same language are spoken in a speech community. This term is used to distinguish between high and low variety of the same language in a speech community. In diglossic situation as well as language shift, language choice plays prominent role for preferring one language and the variety of a language over the other.

1.1 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

This study hypothesizes that Dari, one of the classical languages of Afghanistan is being superseded by Uzbek in day-to-day communication of Sheberghan speakers. This alarming situation of language shift poses below a statement of the problem.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Viewing the growing dominance of Uzbek over Dari, the classical language, "Dari" is facing the threat of language attrition which is a wake-up call for the local speech community.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Given the stated problem above, the general objective of this study is to make a perception survey of using Dari and Uzbek by the local speakers. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- Eliciting the perceptions of Sheberghan speakers towards the use of Dari and Uzbek
- Observing the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in day to day life of Sheberghan speakers.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the perceptions of Sheberghan speakers towards the use of Dari and Uzbek Languages?

- What are the degrees of using Uzbek and Dari in day to day life of Sheberghan speakers?

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant for the reason that it will help the local speech community know about the attrition rate of Dari. Secondly, this study will also alert the local and global linguistic community to think of preparedness to revitalize and preserve the classical language *Dari* at macro level.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the phenomenon of using Dari and Uzbek come under two sociolinguistic debates, it is desirable to understand how sociolinguists look at both the phenomenon. According to Hornberger (2010), language shift donates to the gradual shift of one language by another and refers to language loss in number of speakers, level of usage in a human community. Language shift or transform of language on the social level is the key mechanism underlying the loss of linguistic variety that we are observing today across the globe.

Wright (2008) studied patterns of language use in Hong Kong at the end of colonial rule by Britain in 1997 to explore the issues arising in that context of language contact and language shift. In this study, it is found that the variations in language use and structure in Hong Kong are more lively than traditional models of code-switching or diglossia, which may relatively illustrate the special history of language contact in Hong Kong. In other words, the need for more flexible models of multilingualism are sensible.

Diglossia has been defined differently by various scholars. Ferguson (1959), proposed the term of diglossia and stated that diglossia is situation in which two different variety of the same language are used. On the other hand, Fishman (1967) proposed domain in diglossic situation and expressed that it is domain that makes people decide to pick either high language or low language. Further, he adds that in diglossic situation, either two distinct languages or two varieties of a language are spoken. According to Fishman (1967), both diglossia and bilingualisms can exist together in society.



Bakshi (1992) conducted a survey entitled "the effect of domain on language used in a multilingual community". In this study, he aimed to explore the degree to which English or mother tongue dominates different domains for spoken communication. Further, he tempted to discover whether domains, interlocutor, and topics have noteworthy effect on the use of either language. The result indicated that, there was fairly more use of English in the formal domains than non-formal domains. Further, he found that, there was a significant use of a code mixed variation of English-mother tongue in most of the domains. Likewise, he came to know that, the use of English in some domains differs with the adjustment in the role of relationship and topic.

Mangan (2004) conducted a study considering the applicability of diglossia model for describing patterns of language use in Guadeloupe, French West Indies to discover how in Guadeloupe French and Kréyòlare used by people in their routine conversation and which model best describes their language use. In this study, it is found that language shift is happening in favor of French monolingualism in Guadeloupe.

Haberl and (2005) investigated domains and domain loss to explore different domains of language use and language choice in multilingual communities in Denmark. The result of this study indicated that, domains and domains' loss are correlated with people's attitudes towards languages they know.

Kemp (2007) conducted a study entitled "Defining Multilingualism". In his study, "bilingual" referred to people who know two languages and "Multilingual" referred to those who speak three or more languages. Further, he stated that bilingualism and multilingualism are the similar ability, but with different amount of languages. In this study, linguists are suggested to work collaboratively for giving explicit definition of multilingualism and its principles.

Kandler, et al (2010) investigated the historical shifts of Celtic language speakers of Britain and Ireland to English. Further, in this study, they examined bilingualism which is simply temporary for households moving between alternative monolingual statuses, and a diglossia model in which an extra

demand exists for the endangered language as the favorite medium of communication in some limited sociolinguistic domains. In this research, they conclude that, transmission to English is taking place due to high rate attitude towards English by young generation.

In a similar study, Hornberger (2010) in a study entitled "language shift and language revitalization" in Oxford university, England, highlighted the main factors which contribute to language shift in a community. Likewise, Stepkowska (2012) reviewed the stability and relationship between the definition of diglossia and bilingualism in Swiss context. Further, he highlighted the key differences between bilingualism and diglossia as two phenomena which may overlap in certain contexts.

Heinrich (2015) studied the language shift in present nation states and in his study he concluded that overall, language shift occurs due to change in collective language selections as a result of the political transformations, economic and social ecology of modern communities. Similarly, Kobul (2016) carried a case study to highlight the major sociolinguistic concept like bilingualism, diglossia, language shift and language maintenance in the context of Amish. In other words, this study focused on diglossia and bilingualism in the Amish community. The result of this study presented that Amish people protected their language and identity by isolating themselves form outer English speaking world.

Having seen the implications of diglossia and language shift in the narratives of different scholars, this study correlates that phenomenon of Uzbek's dominance over Dari by Sheberghan speakers in their day to day life can be viewed as an example of both diglossia and language shift.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY

As for the subjects of this study, 100 educated bilinguals comprising 52 female and 48 male were selected from Jawzjan University.

3.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study used random sampling technique to select the subjects so that any bias could be minimized.

3.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This study used two data gathering tools namely questionnaire and participant observation.

3.4 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS:

The collected data were analyzed using two methods namely *descriptive statistics* and *analytic induction*.

4. FINDINGS

In response to the first research question, the study aimed at eliciting the perceptions of Sheberghan speakers towards using Dari and Uzbek through

participant observation. The result of the observation revealed that Uzbek is often preferred by the Sheberghan speakers in seven major domains of life namely *at home, with friends, in market, with neighbors, at workplace, in academia, and at religious place*. In what follows, we shall see the degree of using Dari and Uzbek in the seven major domains for different communicative goals as stated in Austin (1955).

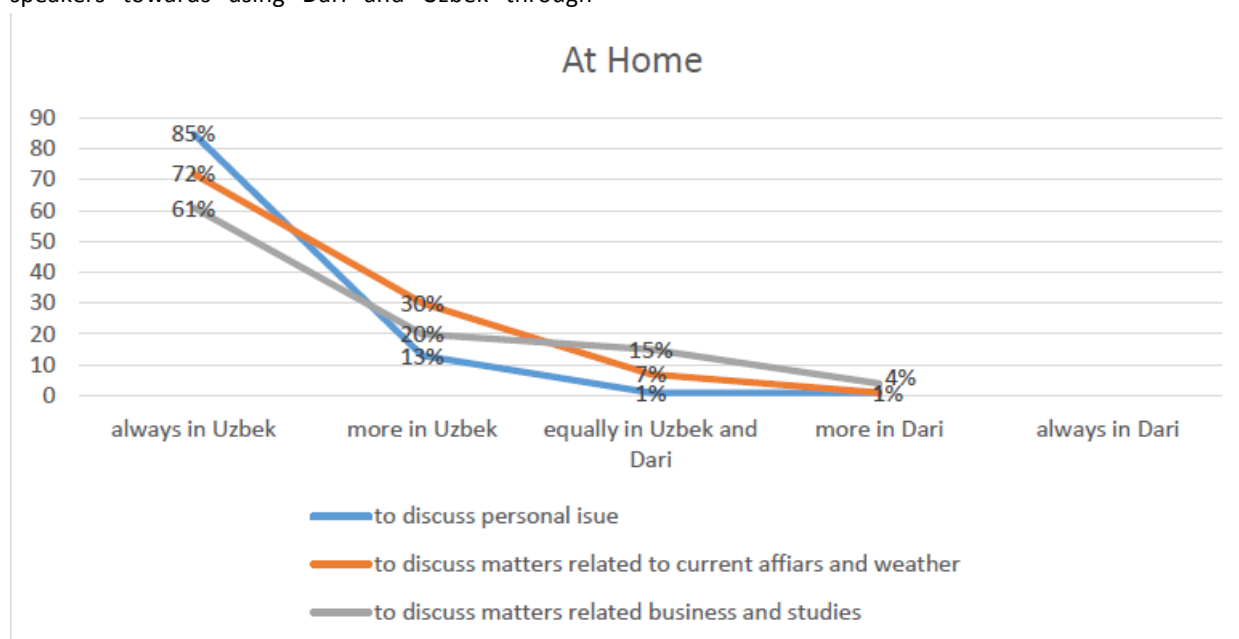


Figure-1: Degree of Speaking Uzbek and Dari at Home

The figure-1 above shows the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in the domain of *home* for three communicative goals in relation to five categories. As for the degree of using Uzbek *to discuss personal issue* under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 85 percent to discuss personal issues. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 13 percent to discuss personal matters. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 1 percent to discuss personal matters. On the other hand, the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss personal matters.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to *current affairs and weather* under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 72 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows the Uzbek is used up to 30 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” the data shows that both languages are used equally up to 7 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to *business and studies*, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 61 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, shows that Uzbek is used up to 20 percent to discuss matters related to business and

studies. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” indicates that both languages are used equally up to 15 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 4 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies.

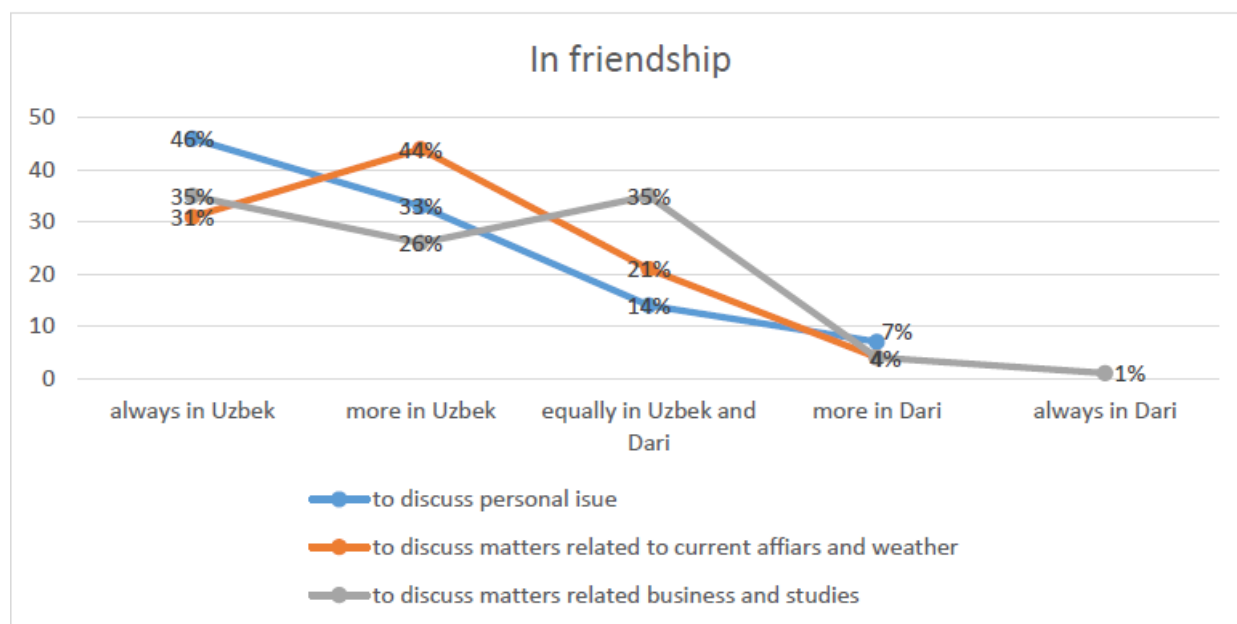


Figure-2: Degree of Speaking Uzbek and Dari in friendship

The figure-2 above shows the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in the domain of *friendship* for three communicative goals in relation to five categories. As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss personal issue under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 46 percent to discuss personal matters. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 33 percent to discuss personal matters. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 14 percent to discuss personal matters. On the other hand, the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 7 percent to discuss personal issues.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 35 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 44 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. While under the

category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 21 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 4 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to business and studies, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 35 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 26 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 35 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 4 percent and under the category “always in Dari” is show the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies.

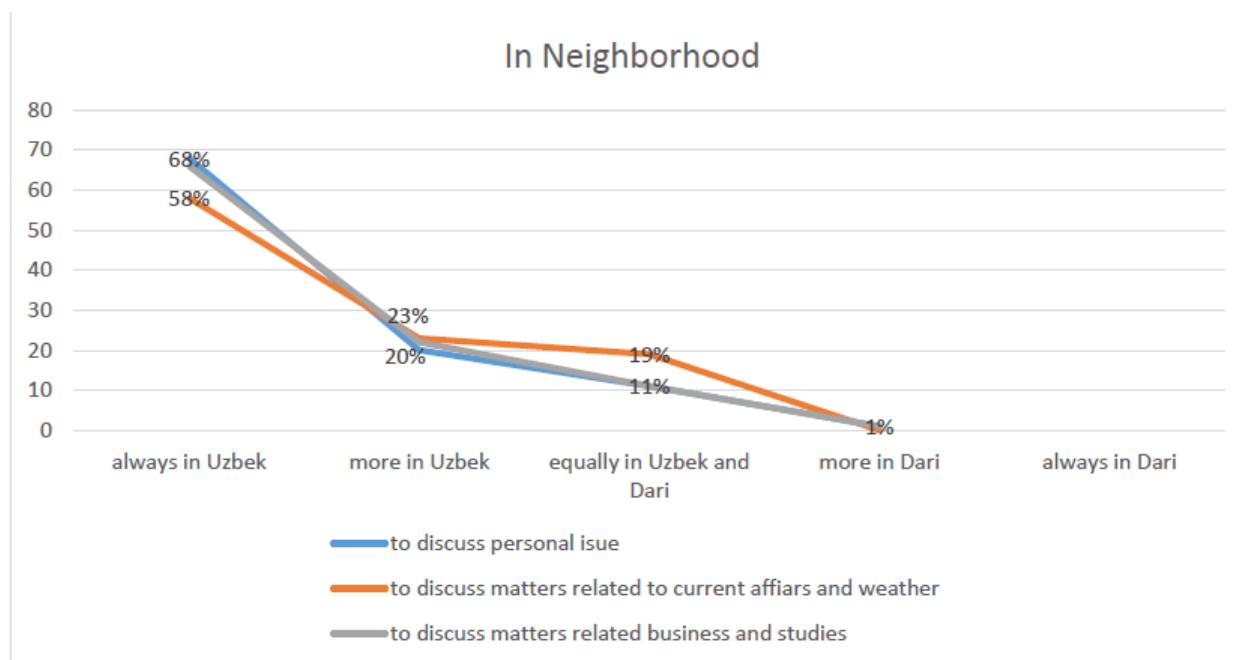


Figure-3: Degree of Speaking Uzbek and Dari neighborhood

The figure-3 above shows the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in the domain of *Neighborhood* for three communicative goals in relation to five categories. As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss personal issue under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 68 percent to discuss personal matters. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 22 percent to discuss personal matters. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 11 percent to discuss personal matters. On the other hand, the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss personal issues.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 58 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 44 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. While under the

category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 11 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to business and studies, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 68 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 22 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 35 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 11 percent and under the category “always in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies.

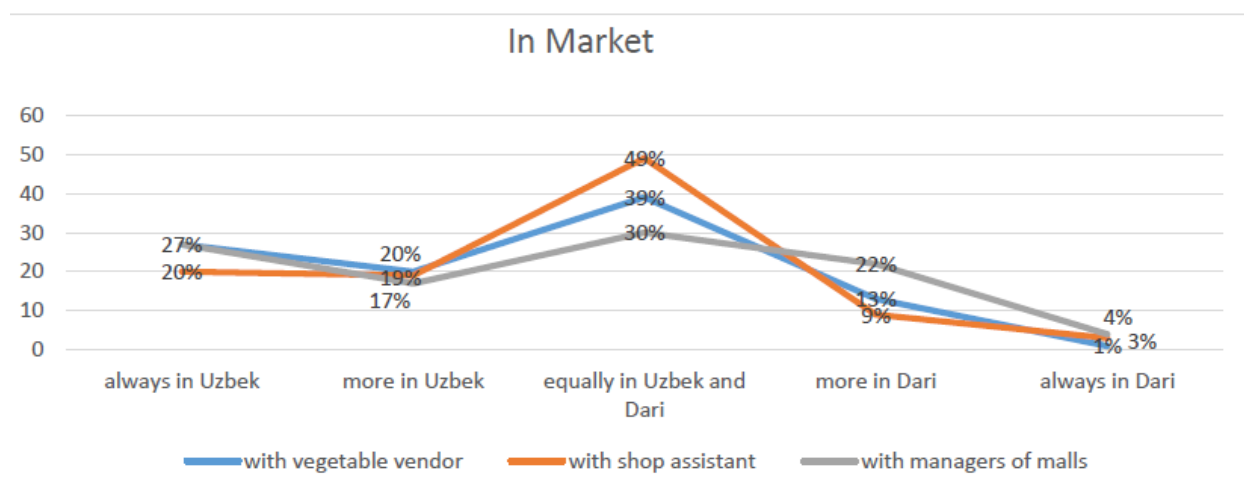


Figure-4: Degree of Speaking Uzbek and Dari in market

The figure-4 above shows the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in the domain of *Market* for three communicative goals in relation to five categories. As for the degree of using Uzbek to talk with vegetable vendor under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 27 percent to talk with vegetable vendor. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 20 percent to talk with vegetable vendor. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 39 percent to talk with vegetable vendor. On the other hand, the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 13 percent and under the category “Always in Dari” shows that Dari is used up to 1 percent to talk with vegetable vendor.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to talk with shop assistant, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 20 percent to talk with shop assistant. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 19 percent to talk with shop assistant. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 49 percent to talk with shop assistant. On the other

hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 9 percent and under the category “Always in Dari” shows the use of Dari up to 3 percent to talk with shop assistant.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to talk with the managers of the malls, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 27 percent to talk with the managers of the malls. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 17 percent. While, under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 30 percent to talk with the managers of the malls. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 22 percent and under the category “Always in Dari” shows the use of Dari up to 4 percent to talk with the managers of the malls.

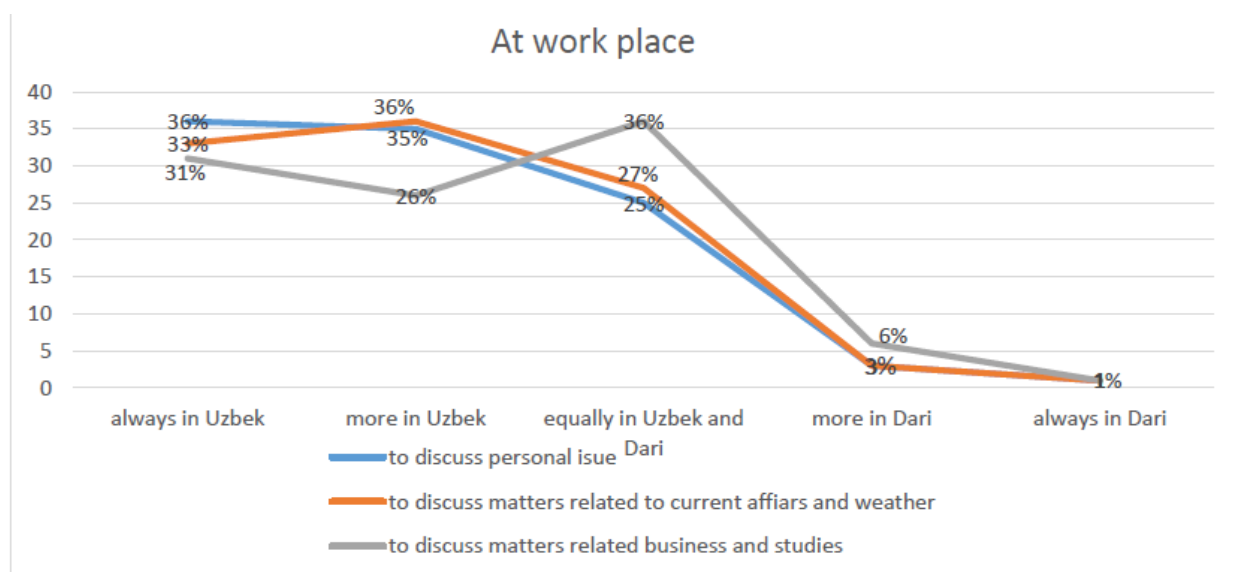


Figure-5: Degree of Speaking Uzbek and Dari at work place

The figure-5 above shows the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in the domain of *work place* for three communicative goals in relation to five categories. As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss personal issue under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 36 percent to discuss personal matters. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 35 percent to discuss personal issues. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 25 percent to discuss personal matters. On the other hand, the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 3 percent and under the category “Always in Dari” shows the use of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss personal issues.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 33 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 36 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. While under the

category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 27 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 3 percent and under the category “Always in Dari” shows the use of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to business and studies, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 31 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, shows that Uzbek is used up to 26 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 36 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 6 percent and under the category “always in Dari” shows the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies.

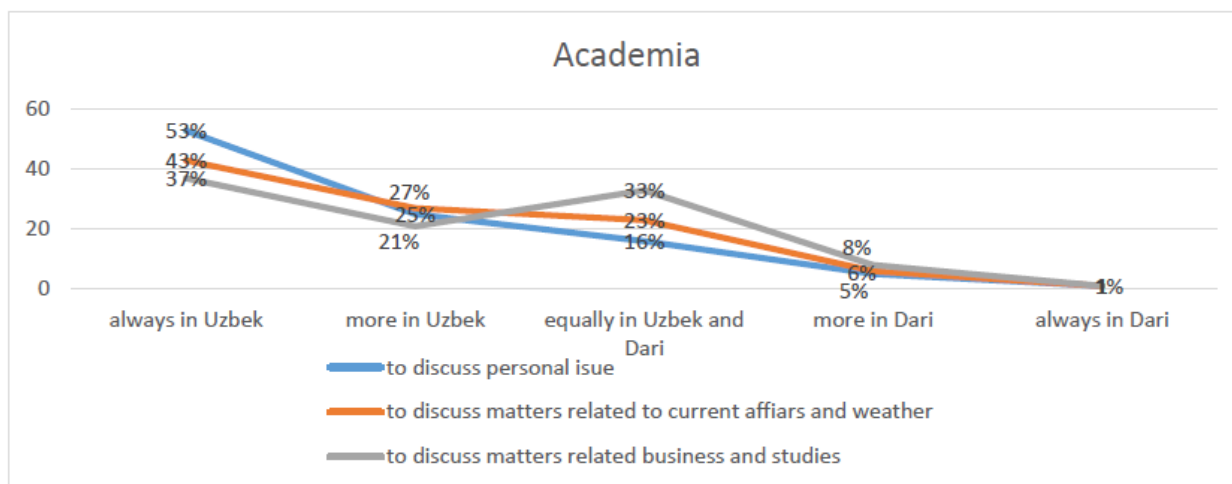


Figure-6: Degree of Speaking Uzbek and Dari at college/university

The figure-6 above shows the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in the domain of *academia* for three communicative goals in relation to five categories. As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss personal issue under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 53 percent to discuss personal matters. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 25 percent to discuss personal matters. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 16 percent to discuss personal matters. On the other hand, the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 5 percent and under the category “Always in Dari” shows the use of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss personal issues.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 43 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 25 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 23 percent to

discuss matters related to current affairs and weather. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 6 percent and under the category “Always in Dari” it shows the use of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to current affairs and weather.

As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss matters related to business and studies, under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 37 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 21 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 33 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 8 percent and under the category “always in Dari” it shows the usage of Dari up to 1 percent to discuss matters related to business and studies.

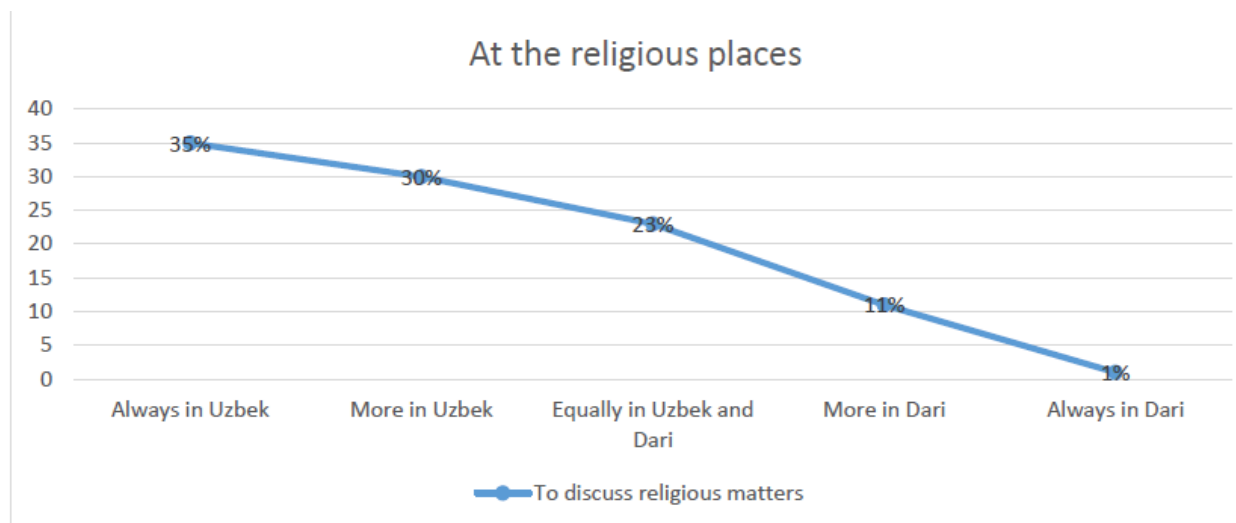


Figure-7: Degree of Speaking Uzbek and Dari at the religious places

The figure-6 above shows the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in the domain of *Neighborhood* for three communicative goals in relation to five categories. As for the degree of using Uzbek to discuss religious issues under the category “always in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 35 percent to discuss religious issues. Likewise, under the category “More in Uzbek”, it shows that Uzbek is used up to 30 percent to discuss religious issues. While under the category “Equally in Uzbek and Dari” it indicates that both languages are used equally up to 23 percent to discuss religious issues. On the other hand, under the category “More in Dari”, it shows the usage of Dari up to 11 percent to and under the category “Always in Dari” it shows the use of Dari up to 1 percent discuss religious issues.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the paper has tried to attain its two objectives (i) eliciting the perceptions of Sheberghan speakers towards the use of Dari and Uzbek and (ii) observing the degree of using Uzbek and Dari in day to day life of the Sheberghan speakers. To summarize the findings, it is important to mention three striking facts. Firstly, Dari, one of the classical languages of Afghanistan is being superseded by Uzbek in day-to-day communication of Sheberghan speakers. Secondly, the findings show that Uzbek dominates Dari in all seven domains with respect to different communicative goals. In informal domains, Dari and Uzbek are equally used up to 23 percent in friendship domain; whereas, Dari is used up to 5 percent mostly for discussing personal issues, current affairs and matters related to business and studies. Thirdly, in the domain of Market, Uzbek and Dari are used

equally up to 40 percent for talking with vegetable vendor, shop assistant and manager of the mall. Thus, language shift from Dari to Uzbek is taking place in Sheberghan city. As a result, Uzbek is taking the status of prestige and high language in sociolinguistic community of Sheberghan. Here, it is desirable to mention that findings of this study are not absolutely generalizable for other province where the majority of residents are Uzbek because this study was made with a small but representative samples at the Jawzjan University. Hence, the study suggests eliciting larger perceptions of the people from different social class of the Sheberghan speech community as well as other northern provinces such as Faryab, Sar-i-pol, Samangan, etc. as a part of future study.

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