

The Concept of the Orthological Minimum and its role in Linguistics

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Abstract: *This article provides a comprehensive definition of the concept of the orthological minimum and analyzes its role in linguistics. The orthological minimum constitutes the practical foundation of speech culture and ensures that language users communicate in a literate and effective manner. The study examines the phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic norms that form part of the orthological minimum and demonstrates the necessity of their accurate, appropriate, and contextually relevant use in the process of communication.*

Keywords: *Orthological Minimum, Orthological Unit, Language Norms, Standard Language*

1. Introduction

It is well established that orthology constitutes a distinct branch of linguistics, closely related to such domains as orthoepy, orthography, punctuation, and stylistics, and that its theoretical foundation has been formed on the basis of these interrelated fields. Orthology is generally understood as the study of “correct norms” governing language use. In both international and Uzbek linguistic scholarship, a number of studies have addressed the nature, scope, and significance of orthology, emphasizing its role in regulating and standardizing linguistic expression.

Building upon these scholarly perspectives, the present study aims to further explore the concept of the orthological minimum and to clarify its functional significance within the broader framework of linguistic norms and speech culture.

Orthology is closely interconnected with several branches of linguistics, including phonetics, lexicology, punctuation, stylistics, orthoepy, and orthography. The determination of orthological norms has remained one of the persistent and significant issues in linguistics since the early stages of its development.

Societal development directly influences the lexical structure of a language. The correct pronunciation and orthography of loanwords often pose certain difficulties for native speakers. In spoken communication, the establishment of strict norms governing the use of neologisms represents one of the urgent linguistic issues. The development of an orthological minimum facilitates the effective and consistent use of neologisms in linguistic practice.

Literature Review

In global linguistic research, the concept of the “orthological minimum” has not been extensively defined as a separate linguistic unit. However, studies in both English and Russian linguistics emphasize its significant role in the compilation of orthological dictionaries.

Russian linguist D. M. Savinov, in his article “On the Principles of Compiling Normative Dictionaries of the Russian Literary Language,” states: “A set of neutral and pure lexical items included in a normative dictionary, representing the standard of the literary language, is understood by users as ‘this is how one can and should speak’” [1].

Savinov’s views express that the units included in normative dictionaries must consist of lexical

items characteristic of the literary language, and only those words that are considered “the most correct” should be included. In real communicative situations, the use of these units enables communicant to use them without any doubt. The scholar’s ideas constitute the basis of the concept of the “orthological minimum” entering contemporary linguistics.

In his article published in the scientific journal *Russian Speech*, the scholar, continuing his views on the principles of compiling normative dictionaries, states as follows: “Normative (orthological) dictionaries include only those units that have acquired the status of the literary norm; however, the content of the dictionary should not be limited to them alone—units that require extensive explanation may also be included” [2].

The above-mentioned views of Savinov clearly demonstrate that words used as literary norms represent the main principle for users of dictionaries. In addition, it is understood that, in order to fully represent the literary language, it is also necessary to include units that require extensive explanation.

Another Russian linguist, I. A. Babayev, in his article titled “The Orthological Principle in Lexicography,” states: “The orthological principle can also be observed throughout the nineteenth century. On the one hand, we see the theoretical foundation for the right to record in dictionaries lexical units that correspond to the norm and are connected with the system, that is, they reflect the living language. On the other hand, dictionaries and manuals on the literary language consistently record ‘incorrect’ forms as well. By the end of the century, even separate ‘dictionaries of incorrect forms’ began to be published” [3].

It is evident that dictionaries are not composed solely of lexical units that conform to the norm; moreover, it is also shown that, in some cases, incorrect orthographic forms of words may be consistently included. In the course of the article, the scholar discusses how orthological norms are selected and states the following: “Ya. K. Grot, in his normative spelling manual, consistently draws attention to errors. He considers it necessary not only to provide the correct form but also to explicitly indicate incorrect forms as well. For example, he notes that many people incorrectly write ‘v techenie, v prodolzhenii,’ whereas it should actually be ‘v techenie, v prodolzhenie,’ which contradicts the common usage of the preposition ‘v’ with a nominal form to express duration in time. The best example of correct usage is the expression ‘vo vremya’” [4].

Babayev’s approaches emphasize that, in normative dictionaries, the correct variants of words emerge through comparison with their incorrect forms. These scholarly studies represent a practical aspect of determining orthological principles and demonstrate that a dictionary is not composed solely of minimal normative units. The views of the Russian scholar Grot cited above are considered a phenomenon not only in the Russian literary language but also in the formation of dictionary systems of all languages. They show that normative dictionaries should be compiled on the basis of the most correct variants of words.

Analysis

The textbook “*Modern Russian Language*” also presents scientific concepts regarding literary language norms and correctly used lexical units. The manual provides examples of “correct” and “incorrect” word forms as well as normative lexical forms. In this regard, the following statement by the author is particularly significant: “The most important feature of the literary language is normativity, that is, the lexical composition of the literary language is strictly selected from the overall richness of the national language; the meaning and usage of words, as well as the formation of pronunciation, spelling, and grammatical forms, are carried out on the basis of generally accepted norms” [5].

The scholar’s views are directly related to the field of orthology and the determination of orthological minima. The normativity of any literary language is defined by the selection of only those units from its lexical stock that correspond to the requirements of the literary norm. These units are

governed by generally accepted standards in terms of word meaning, scope of usage, pronunciation and spelling, as well as grammatical forms. This principle not only implies the selection of units necessary for normative and literary language in defining the minimum but also represents one of the theoretical foundations of the concept of the orthological minimum.

Such approaches play an important role in determining the core aspects of normativity across all languages. In Uzbek linguistics as well, the necessity of establishing the most appropriate norm for literary language has been addressed in several scholarly works. In particular, the following statement reflects similar views: “Normativity and the need for standardization are among the essential features of the literary language. The literary language has lexical (word usage), morphological and syntactic, as well as orthographic and pronunciation norms. The norm of the literary language consists not only of naturally formed standards but also of consciously developed and evaluated ones. These norms are systematized in specific grammatical rules, textbooks and manuals, as well as lexicographic studies” [6].

In all the views presented above, it can be understood that the literary language is a standardized form of the national language and is obligatory for all members of society. The literary language is formed over centuries and is oriented toward preserving linguistic means and their usage rules in both oral and written literary works. Since the literary language possesses a dynamic nature, there is a continuous need for the development of its normative rules. The literary language formed through orthographic, orthoepic, grammatical, and stylistic norms is considered to be a complete and well-developed system.

It is emphasized that the literary language develops through two main processes. The natural formation of norms arises from rules accepted in the everyday practice of speakers. In contrast, consciously developed norms are those defined and systematized by linguists in scientific research, manuals, and reference works.

“Linguistic prescription is considered a part of the process of language standardization. The main aim of linguistic prescription is to define language forms accepted by society in a way that makes them easy to teach and acquire. Prescription may apply to many aspects of language, including orthography, pronunciation, vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and semantics” [7].

The views of the English linguist also indicate that orthological minima are defined through several branches of the literary language. In all the ideas presented above, it is evident that the standardization of the literary language and the development of generally accepted rules of the national language constitute one of the main tasks facing linguists.

The Russian linguist D. E. Rozental, in his textbook “Russian Language,” discusses the specific features of modern Russian literary language, emphasizing that it is not only the language of fiction but also the language of state documents, education, science, radio and television, theatre, and the press. He also highlights that the standardization of the literary language is one of the most important tasks for linguists. In particular, when discussing the normativity of the literary language, the scholar states: “The normativity of the literary language lies in the fact that its vocabulary is strictly selected from the general richness of the national language, and the meaning and usage of words, pronunciation, spelling, and the formation of grammatical forms are subject to generally accepted norms and traditions” [8].

2. Methodology

In this paper, the scholar provides an overview of the oral and written forms of the literary language and lists their distinguishing features in terms of lexical composition and grammatical structure. In particular, he pays special attention to the written form of the literary language, stating that “written literary language differs from spoken language by a certain degree of syntactic

complexity, a more extensive use of lexical items, as well as the presence of terms, especially international words.”

From the scientific views of Russian and world linguists on literary language and its normative features, it can be understood that standardization occurs across several levels of language. Accordingly, the orthological minimum of the literary language is selected as a result of the normalization of the following linguistic levels:

- Orthoepic norms
- Lexical norms
- Orthographic norms
- Grammatical norms
- Stylistic norms

Orthoepy is considered a branch of phonetics and originates from the Greek meaning “to speak correctly.” The need for orthoepic norms arises primarily from the existence of different dialectal variants of certain words and affixes, as well as from the combination of word elements, the interaction of sounds, and phonetic changes in speech [9].

Core Section

It is evident that the internal variability of language leads to the need for orthoepic norms. In particular, the presence of various dialects and subdialects in the Uzbek language, where certain words and affixes have phonetically different variants, creates the necessity for a unified and comprehensible pronunciation system for all speakers. The literary language serves to standardize such diversity.

In addition, one of the main tasks of orthoepy is to regulate processes in spoken language such as the shortening, lengthening, or substitution of sounds under the influence of speech rate, stress, intonation, and phonetic environment.

Literary pronunciation norms arise on the basis of two important factors. The first is orthography, and the second is the various forms of spoken language as well as different dialectal pronunciations. Orthography is considered the main factor in the formation of literary pronunciation. However, in many cases, pronunciation does not correspond to orthography [10].

The scholar’s views clearly demonstrate that in spoken communication, forms such as “*izsiz – issiz*”, “*uchta – ushta*”, “*besh so‘m – besso‘m*”, and “*bo‘lsa – bo‘sa – bulsa*” do not correspond to the norms of literary pronunciation. This indicates that orthoepic norms are also formed on the basis of facts from living spoken language.

Mastering orthoepic norms implies the complete acquisition of accurate pronunciation of each word and phrase, the correct placement of stress, the flawless articulation of sounds, and similar aspects [11].

A deep study and mastery of orthoepic norms is considered one of the most important aspects of speech culture. In particular, correct pronunciation of words, the normative placement of stress, and clear articulation of sounds ensure the accurate transmission of information in the communication process. In addition, adherence to orthoepic norms guarantees the stability of the literary language.

Lexical norms regulate the use of words in accordance with their meanings and their combinability with other words [12].

The development of lexical norms has been one of the important issues in world linguistics. Its main function is to ensure clarity and comprehensibility of speech through the appropriate use of words in accordance with their meanings and adherence to rules of their combinability with other words. The development of lexical norms stabilizes the literary language and serves as an integral part of speech culture. In particular, the correct selection of synonyms, avoidance of semantically contradictory word combinations, and contextual appropriateness of words enhance the fluency and expressiveness of speech. Similar ideas in Uzbek linguistics are expressed as follows: Lexicon is not

merely a simple collection of all words in a language, but rather a coherent and complex system governed by specific rules [13].

The lexical system of language is formed through lexical norms. In this system, words constitute a complex and coherent structure governed by semantic and stylistic rules. At the same time, a word or phrase in speech must be used not only in accordance with its own meaning but also by observing the rules of combinability with other words in context. The establishment of lexical norms ensures semantic accuracy of words, regulates their combinability and contextual adaptability, and guarantees that speech is fluent, comprehensible, and literary. This, in turn, enhances speech culture and strengthens the stability of the literary language.

Orthography refers to the written form of the literary language and is the field that regulates the correct spelling of words. It covers the spelling of word roots and stems, affixes, compound words written together or separately, abbreviations, capitalization rules, and syllabification, all of which are standardized in accordance with literary pronunciation norms [14].

Orthography is the main branch that standardizes written speech. It is a system that regulates not only the correct spelling of words but also of roots and affixes in accordance with literary pronunciation and linguistic laws. In particular, the *“Spelling Dictionary of the Uzbek Language”* states: “The task of defining orthographic norms of the literary language is an extremely responsible and difficult task”.

3. Results and Discussion

Indeed, orthographic norms are closely interconnected with orthoepic norms and harmonize phonetic and morphological features in writing. Written language is formed on the basis of pronunciation rules of spoken language, but it does not reproduce them exactly. Orthography establishes a stable and unified writing standard. For example, words such as *boribdi, zavoddan, ko‘pdan, ketguncha* are pronounced as *boripti, zavottan, ko‘ptan, ketkuncha*. Since this form contradicts the rules of the literary language, it is not reflected in writing.

In this respect, orthography ensures consistency and uniformity in the writing of linguistic units, making written speech clear and comprehensible, and strengthening the normativity of the literary language. Thus, orthography is not only a set of technical writing rules but also a system that regulates variability within language. At the same time, it is a system of great theoretical and practical importance that organizes written speech on the basis of a unified norm.

Grammatical norms occupy a central place in linguistics in determining language units and sentence structure. Different schools of linguistics provide different definitions of this concept. For example, the English linguist Noam Chomsky, in his book *“Aspects of the Theory of Syntax,”* presents the following idea regarding grammatical norms: “The grammar of a language aims to describe the internal competence of an ideal speaker-hearer”.

Through these views, the scholar connects grammatical norms with generative linguistics. According to the scholar, grammar is not merely a set of rules regulating words and sentences, but rather a system that reflects the speaker’s and listener’s internal ability to understand and produce language. Therefore, generative grammar seeks to identify what speakers know about sentence construction and syntactic structure. N. Chomsky focuses primarily on the speaker’s subconscious competence, that is, what they actually know and which grammatical rules they can automatically apply.

The process of defining grammatical norms is also directly oriented toward the speaker’s internal competence. In this respect, Chomsky’s ideas on generative grammar are fully aligned.

In Russian linguistics, grammatical norm is defined as follows: “A grammatical norm consists of the grammatical rules of a language, which determine the formation of words and word forms, as well

as the structure of phrases and sentences. The correctness of grammatical speech lies in selecting the variant that meets normative requirements .”

It is evident from this definition that the main function of grammatical norm is to determine the basic rules and structure of language. It defines the formation of words, the relations between them, and the rules for constructing sentences, while also ensuring that speech is normative and comprehensible. These rules are not created through complex theoretical constructs for speakers, but through their subconscious competence.

In the Uzbek language, grammatical norms are strictly regulated; they determine word formation, combination, and agreement within sentence structure . It is evident that the grammatical norms of each language are developed by the speakers of that language. Both of the above definitions reveal that the main function of grammatical norm is the correct formation of word forms, word combinations, and sentences, as well as ensuring the normative correctness of speech.

Thus, defining grammatical norm is not only about regulating linguistic units, but also about systematically describing the internal structure of language based on the speaker’s internal competence. At the same time, certain speech errors or individual evaluations in actual usage cannot serve as the main source for defining grammatical norm, as they do not fully reflect the internal system of rules.

Stylistic norms, like other types of norms, play an important role in the communication process. In particular, Czech linguistics provides the following definition: “Although they are less obligatory than linguistic norms, they exist, and both the author of a text and its recipient intuitively know them. Like linguistic norms, they are formed analogically during the process of text production; they are also acquired through generalization based on previously known texts connected with communicative situations”

These views indicate that stylistic norms are not strict linguistic rules, but rather conventional and recommended forms used to express certain types of information. In this context, they are compared with linguistic norms, and their distinctive features are highlighted. The article states: “The process of mastering stylistic norms never ends, because (unlike linguistic norms) the sources for their identification are highly diverse, and their repertoire develops throughout a person’s life” .

Thus, stylistic norms are not fixed and one-time rules; they are formed in relation to communicative situations and context. In mastering stylistic norms, communicants must take into account life experience and communicative context.

Such ideas are also presented in the work “*Stylistics of the Russian Language*” by the Russian linguist M. N. Kozhina. In this book, the scholar shows that the main object of stylistics is the laws of language functioning, that is, the appropriate use of linguistic units in spoken or written communication in accordance with communicative situations. “In this respect,” she notes, “functional domains such as official, scientific, literary, publicistic, and everyday communication are distinguished as standardized and socially significant spheres of interaction” .

The above views show that stylistics can be divided into normative stylistics, which deals with the correct and standardized use of words and expressions in scientific, official, or literary language, and emotional stylistics. In emotional stylistics, particularly in literary, publicistic, or spoken language, the connotative and expressive meanings of words are emphasized[15].

4. Conclusion

Thus, stylistic norms not only ensure that linguistic units are used appropriately, clearly, and purposefully in communicative situations, but also enhance the stylistic effectiveness of language through their normative and emotional functions.

The correct application of language units, and their normalization in terms of pronunciation,

orthography, and stylistic usage, is regarded as one of the important directions of linguistics known as orthology. In the course of the research, the interrelatedness of the orthoepic, lexical, orthographic, grammatical, and stylistic norms of language units, as well as their role in ensuring stability in the literary language, were extensively elucidated.

The analyses indicate that language norms are not determined by rigid rules; rather, they are formed on the basis of speech practice in society, the internal linguistic competence of language users, and the process of historical development. From this point of view, the orthological minimum acquires significant importance in the formation of language culture as a set of the most necessary and selectively established normative units for the literary language.

At the same time, each type of norm ensures that speech is precise, fluent, and comprehensible to the general public. Their harmony serves to make the literary language stable and functionally complete. In general, the in-depth study and practical application of orthological norms constitute one of the principal factors in improving speech culture and developing the normative system of the language.

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