Exploring the emotional dimension of Uzbek language decolonisation: insights from the experiences of learning Uzbek as a second language

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Abstract

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In this thesis I aim to identify emotional experiences of learning Uzbek as a second language in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, the factors that shape them and affect the Uzbek language decolonisation. I also aim to address the following research gap: similarly to the global context, the acquisition of Uzbek as a second language and the language of majority by the representatives of this majority, its decolonisation and related emotions have been under-theorised or studied separately and never in combination. For that I have used Shao et al.'s (2020) and Zembylas's (2022) conceptualisations to theorise the link between language acquisition and affective decolonisation. I have also interviewed former school and university learners and current teachers of Uzbek as a second language, and used narrative analysis, which helped me achieve the aims of this research. The study has identified positive and negative emotional experiences of learning Uzbek as a second language and factors shaping them. Out of these, only shame- and guilt-shaping factors have been shown to significantly affect the development of decolonial mind-sets in relation to Uzbek language. Thus, shame is shown to obstruct decolonisation by impeding decolonising solidarity. In contrast, guilt is shown to facilitate decolonisation by fostering decolonising solidarity. Both feelings are known to have the same effects on second language acquisition, hence bridging it with language decolonisation. Additionally, based on the research results, a few viable suggestions have been made to improve the attitude to Uzbek language as a school subject.

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Author's declaration: I declare that the thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

The word count does not exceed the permitted maximum of 45,000.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Setting the Scene

Using the knowledge gained from the experiences and perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as a second language, this study intends to investigate the emotional aspect of Uzbek language decolonisation. Understanding the historical backdrop and the context[1] in which the decolonisation of the Uzbek language is taking place is essential to understand the significance of the issue chosen. I will start outlining that now.

The research (e.g., Schweitzer, 2020) reveals that despite the fact that Uzbek has been the official language of post-Soviet Uzbekistan, my native country, for more than 30 years, Russian, as a former imperial language, continues to be used in a variety of Uzbek contexts. This in turn affects the choice of instruction language at the nation's educational institutions. Although the Cyrillic-based Uzbek alphabet was replaced with a Latin-based one in 1993, and Russian is no longer recognised as the official language of interethnic communication in Uzbekistan (Pavlenko, 2008), these changes did little to strengthen the position of the Uzbek language in the country (Alimdjanov, 2019). In addition to this, the majority of language initiatives in Uzbekistan stop at emotional speeches and patriotic declarations to hide the lack of actual initiatives that would promote the language across the country (Asanov, 2020a).

The neoliberal nature of the current state's course, which was established during the early stages of the 1990s transition period and said that "economics should be prioritised over politics" (Ruziev, 2021:1308), has made the situation with Uzbek language worse. As Uzbekistan made the shift to a market economy, its principles—which include expanding freedom and reducing government accountability—were pushed in all aspects of Uzbek society, which had an

[1] More detailed context will be given in Chapter 3.

impact on the instructional language choice. Some Uzbek nationals initially continued to adhere to Russian since they had the freedom to do so. However, their numbers increased, once Russia reclaimed its economic and political power in the 2000s and the strained ties between Uzbekistan and Russia were restored. All these in turn posed a problem for the law intended to revive Uzbek (Jehan and Khan, 2022).

Despite the government's official admission that "the implementation of the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Uzbekistan is left to the mercy of fate" (Nigmatullaev in Isroilova, 2021:89), the independent Uzbekistan's language policy actually helped to advance the situation with Uzbek. This was accomplished mainly because many ethnic Russians and native Russian speakers—the primary holders of the imperial language legacy—have emigrated (Boehmer, 2007) due to lacking clarity on the policy's ultimate goal (Schlyter, 1997) and worrying about potential discrimination or assimilation (Landau et al., 2001). Currently, there are 35.3 million people living in Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan population, 2023) and 28 million of them speak Uzbek (Uzbekistan state language, 2023). Although these figures are optimistic, they are only a nice facade hiding major problems that are impeding Uzbek language modernisation, decolonisation and rise to prominence.

Local experts (e.g. Alimdjanov, 2019) believe these will not happen for the following reasons: 1) Uzbekistan's elite and intellectuals are highly pro-Russian, and knowledge of the Uzbek language only is often seen as backwardness; 2) Uzbek is not the language of science in Uzbekistan, but the language of the "common people"; 3) the current use of literary Uzbek remains as limited as in the Soviet era. It should be noted, though, that the Uzbek government has recently made a concerted effort to improve the situation, as evidenced by the numerous laws and agreements that were recently passed and approved[2]. However, as Zaripov (2020) points out, the relevant legislation primarily

[2] Please see Chapter 3 for more information on this.

concentrates on matters relating to Uzbek terminology, the alphabet, spelling rules, translations, language use, scope, and technologies while ignoring the significance of education for language decolonisation. And this is taking into account the fact that Uzbekistan still has a sizable population of non-Uzbek speakers (including those of native Uzbeks) who have studied Uzbek in schools for years but have been unable or discouraged from learning this language proficiently.

1.2 My Research Rationale

My research aims to pinpoint the emotional experiences and perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as a second language in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, which will be explained as follows. With regard to how the Uzbek language education system affects the desire of Uzbek nationals to study Uzbek and if it works to promote Uzbek's position as a unifying national language, this research may be helpful in illuminating the emotional aspect of the decolonisation of the Uzbek language. By Uzbek language decolonisation I mean strengthening its position in Uzbekistan as a language deinstitutionalised from a heavy Russian influence, that can reflect modernity and be embraced by all Uzbekistanis.

Considering that Russian is my first language, I believe I have acquired Uzbek successfully throughout the years. I could not speak a word of Uzbek until I was nine years old, but now I am able to read literary materials, translate, talk, and even create poetry in the language. I often attribute this positive experience to the Uzbek language teacher I had at school. I am extremely appreciative of this instructor for igniting my lifelong love of this language. Whether it was the way she taught and explained things, the relationships we built during the eight years of teaching and learning, or both, they had a significant impact on how I came to understand and value Uzbek culture.

However, those familiar with me may contend that Uzbek is my heritage language, my parents are fluent in Uzbek, I have spent my entire life in Uzbekistan, and as a result, I have had ample opportunities to utilise on a daily basis what I have learnt in my Uzbek lessons at school. While Uzbek is

undoubtedly a valuable part of my life, it is also an integral aspect of my blood brothers' identities, despite their limited proficiency in the language. Even though they have relocated to Kazakhstan and Russia, where Uzbek is not as essential, I am left to ponder whether their decision to leave has influenced their perception of Uzbek as a socioeconomically dispensable skill or if their experience with Uzbek culture and language has informed their decision to leave. Additionally, I am intrigued by the ways in which learning Uzbek as a second language in school may have hindered some of my friends, classmates, and peers who still reside in Uzbekistan from advancing their Uzbek language skills.

The fascination with this subject stems not solely from my personal learning experiences. My teaching practice also indicates that possessing Uzbek as a heritage language or being an ethnic Uzbek does not automatically correspond with the aspiration to enhance and cultivate Uzbek proficiency. For instance, despite numerous discussions with families about the importance of supporting the home language skills of Uzbek students, the Uzbek language club that I have supervised at my school for years has had the least attendance. In contrast, the Russian language club continues to be much more popular. I anticipate that this research will help me understand the emotions towards Uzbek language that I, as an educator, could and could not shape.

The afore-mentioned aspects constitute the individual importance of the proposed investigation. As an Uzbek national who grew up speaking Russian as a first language but was able to develop proficiency in Uzbek, it is crucial for me to explore decolonisation theory and particularly the notion of decolonising solidarity, in order to gain a better understanding of my circumstances. This will help me understand why I was able to learn Uzbek while many individuals in my immediate environment were not able to do so.

One might question my decision to focus on decolonising a language that is not my first language, and which at present may not offer as many prospects and options as Russian, particularly when I am already proficient in the latter. Another one might even accuse me in taking an excessively nationalist and nativist position based on my engagement with decolonisation issues. However, in this

research I am not arguing for the rejection of Russian language, intolerance to Russians and/or the intercultural conflict. My primary intention is to take a well-balanced path to understand the linguistic situation in my country, which will allow me to contribute to ongoing research that integrates the principles of decolonisation, social justice, fair education, and hopefully, to bring together all learners of Uzbek rather than separate them.

In addition to its personal significance, the proposed research carries broader implications. They are related to the distinct linguistic landscape of Uzbekistan and its contribution to the growing body of research on decolonisation and emotions. When considering the unique linguistic context of Uzbekistan in relation to the decolonisation of Uzbek language learning, it is important to keep in mind the following:

Firstly, unlike the national languages of other post-Soviet states in the Caucasus and Baltics, the modern standard Uzbek, along with other Central Asian languages, is largely a product of Soviet national language policy, from alphabet to grammar[3] (Dickens, 1988).

Secondly, Uzbekistan gained state status for Uzbek only in 1989, whereas some other national languages of post-Soviet states (e.g. Georgian; Amirejibi-Mullen, 2012) have never been taken off this status.

Thirdly, Uzbek is the majority language in Uzbekistan (Akhmedjanova and Jeffery, 2021), which does not face extinction as some minority languages in Canada, for example.

Fourthly, the percentage of ethnic Russians in Uzbekistan is much lower than in neighbouring Kazakhstan or in post-Soviet Latvia and Estonia (Kosmarskaya, 2014).

[3] For more detail see Chapters 2 and 3.

Fifthly, Uzbekistan remains a relatively Russian-friendly state, in contrast to Georgia, Moldova, or Baltic countries that share a common Soviet history. This is evidenced by its support for various Russian projects, including those related to the promotion of the Russian language (Dadabaev, 2019; Holova, 2022).

Finally, most postcolonial African and American countries deliberately chose former imperial languages as their official languages due to the absence of standardised native languages (Simpson, 2008) and the large number of European settlers (Hamel, Lopez, and Carvalhal, 2018), respectively. In contrast, most Southeast Asian countries have officially adopted a multilingual approach, developing both native and former imperial languages (Ng and Cavallaro, 2019). Post-Soviet states, including Uzbekistan, have taken steps to strengthen only their standardised titular languages and limit the use of Russian in various areas of public life (Pavlenko, 2008). The measures taken to revive the Uzbek language in Uzbekistan such as giving it a sole status of state language and a transitioning to the Latin-based script can be described as both "the postcolonial condition" and "decolonial option" (Tlostanova, 2019:165) in a post-socialist setting, which is distinct from capitalist Eurocentric ones[4].

1.3 Research Questions and Contribution to the Literature

The research aims to answer the following questions:

● How do learners of Uzbek as a second language perceive and interpret their emotional experiences within the context of Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan?

[4] For more information about the difference between “postcolonial” and “decolonial” please see subsection 1.5.1.

● What are the critical factors that shape these emotional experiences, and in what ways do they facilitate or obstruct the decolonisation of the Uzbek language?

I intend to answer these questions by conducting semi-structured interviews with the Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as a second language. I will use narrative analysis to explicate the data. I will also be applying Shao et al's (2020) model explaining the connection between second language acquisition and emotions and Zembylas's (2022) conceptualisation of affective decolonisation to frame my research and construct meaning out of my findings.

The unique Uzbek language decolonisation story, which will be explored in my research, has significant implications and can contribute to the understanding of context-specific decolonisation implementation. After the dissolution of the USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), post-Soviet states in Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia, and Central Asia have taken measures to decolonise their national languages. Therefore, this research may provide insight into how language decolonisation occurs in the post-Soviet space by using Uzbekistan as a specific example to enhance the existing discourse.

Moreover, my study can contribute to the growing research on decolonisation and emotions (e.g., Leonardo and Zembylas, 2013; Matias and Zembylas, 2014; DiAngelo, 2018; Barreiro et al., 2020) by highlighting the critical role of emotions in language decolonisation (e.g., Goodin, 2015; Hinton, Huss and Roche, 2018; Khawaja, 2021; Napier and Whiskeyjack, 2021). These findings can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the role of emotions in learning a language to be decolonised, and, by doing so, contribute to Zembylas's (2022) affective decolonisation framework (see Chapter 4). Additionally, this research aims to provide Uzbek language teachers at Uzbek schools and universities with food for thought regarding their teaching practices. By reflecting on their pedagogical approaches in terms of their emotional contributions to students' desire to learn Uzbek, this study may have a significant impact on how students perceive learning the Uzbek language.

1.4 On terminology

1.4.1 Colonialism and the related terms

Gorshenina (2021:178) provides the following definition of colonialism:

> "Colonialism – [...] refers to a historically specific period, linked to particular conquests in the early modern and modern eras, which were presented as 'civilizing missions' aimed at modernizing 'backward' populations and cultures. The 'progressiveness' of modern colonial empires purportedly gave their forerunners and advocates the right to annex regions beyond the European continent and create a hierarchical structure of government. Within this framework, the local populations had limited rights in comparison to the inhabitants of the metropoles (the centres of the colonial empires) under the pretext of their alleged 'backwardness' and 'underdevelopment' and of cultural or racial particularities, while the metropoles reaped the colonies' resources and sought to maximise profits from them." (Ibid.)

Gorshenina (2021) critically evaluates the 'unique' status of the Russian empire and the USSR in contemporary research in terms of colonialism, which is usually contrasted to 'classical' European imperialism with annihilation, slavery and apartheid of their overseas subjects. However, despite Russia's geographic location, the proximity of its colonies to the metropole, the anti-imperial rhetoric of the Soviet time, the equal involvement of the metropole and its colonies in the social adventures (e.g., atheism, collectivisation, industrialisation, repressions, nativisation), socioeconomic benefits for its colonies as well as the lack of its former subjects' perception of the time under Russia as colonial, she concludes that the above definition of colonialism is quite applicable to describe Russia's behaviour on the annexed territories. Yet, when considering this colonialism in relation to Uzbek language it is worth keeping in mind its specifics given in detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

It is imperative to note that I use the term ‘Russian colonialism’ to specify the formal period of Uzbekistan being under Russia. When meaning the continuous consequences of this colonialism after Uzbekistan gained independence, I use the term ‘coloniality’, according to the following definition:

> “Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism.” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243)

Interestingly, the above definition is very similar to that of ‘postcoloniality’ given by Gorshenina (2021:178):

> “Postcoloniality – The intellectual, ideological and cultural consequences of colonialism that remain after the formal end of a colonial order.”

Furthermore, it has been argued that when “the impact of colonialism is still so discernible that it may not be appropriate to refer to any “post” because it creates the false impression that we have overcome the impact of colonialism” (Makoni, Severo and Adelhay, 2023:494). With these in mind, in relation to the experiences of my research participants I use the terms ‘coloniality’ and ‘postcoloniality’, ‘colonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ interchangeably, unless I simply mean something “[l]inked to a period chronologically taking place after colonialism, in contrast to ‘pre-colonial'” (Ibid.). Additionally, I justify the interchangeable use of the afore-mentioned terms by Gorshenina’s definition of decolonisation as “the process of overcoming (post)coloniality” (Ibid.), which means combatting both colonial and postcolonial that makes more sense when considering Uzbek language decolonisation after Uzbekistan became an independent state.

1.4.2 Why ‘Uzbek as a second language’

Contemplating which term is more applicable to refer to learning Uzbek in non-Uzbek-medium educational settings, Muhitdinova (2016) suggests using ‘learning Uzbek as a state language’. Indeed, Uzbek is not a foreign language in Uzbekistan, but it is not a mother tongue (L1) or an ancestral language for all students in non-Uzbek-medium educational settings. Moreover, calling Uzbek a second language (L2) would not be correct in relation to students in non-Uzbek-medium educational settings, who speak this language at home. At the same time, Muhitdinova’s (2016) formulation does not exist in world’s practice. Nor does it take into account the fact that Uzbek is a state language in Uzbekistan for all Uzbek learners, be them L1 or L2 learners.

Given the absence of an appropriate term to describe Uzbek nationals who learn Uzbek in Russian-medium educational settings, I will be calling them learners of Uzbek as L2 as this term is the closest to the above definition. Although this formulation does not account for the fact that some of them speak Uzbek at home, their academic Uzbek is not as strong as their Russian and they have never analysed Uzbek literature in Uzbek as an important part of L1 arts suggested by Garcia (2019). Notably, Garcia (2019:152) warns that the above types of language education, calling languages L1, L2, foreign language and even based on the corresponding nation-states (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese etc.) are “constructions of western powers”, whose continuous “coloniality [...] keeps named languages as walls and barriers to opportunities” (Ibid., 166). I will be using the above-explained terminology all throughout my dissertation for the sake of practicality, admitting it as a limitation.

1.5 Overview of Chapters

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. In Chapter 2, I analyse the research on language learning, decolonisation, emotions, and social justice implications globally. My key point here is that the acquisition of a postcolonial national language as a second language by representatives of this majority, as well as its decolonisation and emotions, have all been underexplored, under-theorised, or

researched separately, never in combination. Following that, Chapter 3 explores the literature on Uzbek language development, policy, and planning, as well as the history of teaching and learning Uzbek as L2 in Uzbekistan. This chapter also covers the research on emotions and attitudes towards Uzbek language acquisition. In Chapter 4, I provide a theoretical framework that combines the second language emotions and positive psychology model (Shao et al., 2020) with affective decolonisation theory (Zembylas, 2022). The methodology chapter then discusses the ontological and epistemological foundations of my research, outlines the methodological steps and ethical considerations, and introduces my research participants. Following that, Chapter 6 delves into the emotional experiences and perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as a second language, as well as the injustices that accompany them. Chapter 7 unfolds the factors tied with emotional experiences and affecting the Uzbek language decolonisation. Finally, the conclusion highlights the contributions of my research and makes recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. These are followed by recommendations for future research and my reflection on these research experiences.

Chapter 2: Second language acquisition, decolonisation and emotions: global perspective

2.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns global perspectives on emotions, language decolonisation and second language acquisition. It presents the review of the corresponding literature, which will help situate my research questions. This chapter is divided into five parts. First, I will identify two main venues of the research on language decolonisation, education and emotions: 1) Western perspectives; 2) postcolonial perspectives - and briefly explore the global context of the latter. Third, I will touch on some key areas in the related research and identify important gaps. Fourth, I will outline the major social justice implications accompanying decolonisation. Finally, I will summarise the main literature findings presented in this chapter.

2.2 Language decolonisation, education and emotions across the world: a brief overview

2.2.1 Global context[5]

The control over one's system of knowledge is argued to be a fundamental aspect of colonisation (Said, 1978; Bennabi, 2003; Mignolo, 2009a), and that is why education be it formal or informal (e.g., family- and community-based) as a system that helps transfer and construct knowledge is so relevant to discuss decolonisation (Shihade, 2017; Schwedheim, 2019). Its role in decolonisation has been shown important in establishing critical reflection, conversations, pedagogical practices, and activism, either aiming at social justice or utilising it as a tool (Iseke-Barnes, 2008; Barreiro et al., 2020). Although there is a

[5] This is not an exhaustive review but an attempt to summarise and analyse general trends and patterns.

significant amount of research connecting decolonisation and education, there seem to be two main venues within the context of emotions explored so far.

The first, relatively small one shows the perspectives of white Western individuals on decolonisation. The reviewed literature suggests that white students often experience guilt (Leonardo and Zembylas, 2013), fragility (DiAngelo, 2018), and discomfort (Zembylas, 2018) when the issues of coloniality are raised in the classroom. In this regard, educationalists emphasise the importance of avoiding individualisation as well as the generalisation of blame, while also holding white students responsible for their words and actions, and setting a personal example by actively opposing colonial practices (Matias and Zembylas, 2014; Barreiro et al., 2020).

The second venue is much bigger and demonstrates postcolonial perspectives rooted in the continuous dominance of Eurocentric/Western/white ways of knowing. Considering these perspectives, it is worth looking at the majority and minority ones separately in order to compare and contrast them later with the post-Soviet context in general and Uzbek context in particular. I will do this in the subsections below.

2.2.1.1 American and Oceanian context

When talking about the minority perspectives, I mean the aboriginal languages[6] of both Americas (except Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Guatemala (Gonzalez, 2020) and Oceania (except Marshall islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu (Nationsonline.org, 2017a)) that due to the huge number of people with European ancestry[7] and their languages could

[6] Creole and pidgin languages are out of scope in this review.

[7] The situation differs across the countries. New Caledonia (27.1% CIA, 2014)) and Guam (7.1% (CIA, 2010)), despite the relatively small population with European ancestry given in brackets are currently under French and the US rule, respectively, which explains why French and English are

not achieve the status of official nation-wide languages even after the colonised territories gained independence. Some of them died, whereas others remain seriously endangered (Romaine, 2017). The vast body of research demonstrates traumatic encounters of Indigenous people losing their language, dealing with distorted cultures and experiencing identity problems as well as their struggles to revitalise/decolonise their languages that are not the languages of majority (e.g., West-Newman, 2004; Ortiz, 2009; Yan and Saura, 2015; Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018; Martin et al., 2020; Guerrettaz, 2020; De Costa, 2021; Kroskrity and Meek, 2023; Guerrettaz and Engman, 2023; Ortega, 2023). Although the language decolonisation narratives are strongly linked with emotions there, the latter are the result of the Indigenous language loss and prohibition, but not learning. This is so different from my research context, where Uzbek is not endangered at all and is learnt as L1 and L2 at different levels of education, which justifies different expectations about emotional experiences and (de)colonial perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as L2 that will be explored in this study.

2.2.1.2 African context

The research on the decolonisation of native African languages (e.g., Muhungi, 2011; Trudell et al., 2015; Agyekum, 2018; Gelles, 2018; Hantgan-Sonko, 2018; Khepera, 2020; Stroud and Kerfoot, 2021; Mabasa-Manganyi and Ntshangase, 2021; Maduagwu, 2021; Eme and Uwaezuoke, 2023) is largely similar to the above-mentioned. However, the context is rather different, because the native African population outweighs the successors of European settlers (Africa, 1989). Additionally, in all African states, except Somalia, Ethiopia and the Arabic-speaking states (Nationsonline.org, 2019), the European languages enjoy the

official there. All others, except Australia, Pitcairn, Norfolk islands and New Zealand (Barbosa da Silva, 2019), have a similar situation to that of many African countries, where the number of populations with European ancestry is small but European languages enjoy either the sole official status or equally share it with other Indigenous languages there.

same official status as the major local languages, although their powers are not equal (Prah, 2018). In many African countries with few exceptions (e.g., the Arabic-speaking states) the instruction in local languages does not go beyond the primary school grades, after which the instruction in ex-colonial European languages takes place (Brock-Utne, 2014; Adamson, 2023; Gibson and Wekundah, 2024) that "impedes learning for most schoolchildren" (Kiramba, 2014:49). Although the local languages keep being taught as a school subject in secondary schools (Mukama, 2007), they are usually not taught as L2[8]. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many Africans are multilingual in their local languages, so have more than one L1 (van Pinxteren, 2022), which makes it hard to do justice to all of them especially given that none of these tongues can compete with ex-colonial languages due to the lack of standardisation, modern vocabulary and resources (Prah, 2018).

My research context is similar to this in a sense that the presence of Uzbekistanis with European ancestry is minimal. However, Uzbek is a solely official state language in Uzbekistan, which is well standardised and present at different levels of education as L1 and L2. These contextual peculiarities allow anticipating somewhat different emotional experiences and (de)colonial perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as L2 that will be explored in this study.

2.2.1.3 Asian and European context

In contrast to the situations in the afore-mentioned continents, only very few Asian countries granted official status to European languages. These include Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan having Russian, Macau and Timor-Leste - having Portuguese, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Philippines and Brunei Darussalam - having English as one of their official languages (Nationsonline.org, 2017b). The

[8] The situation differs in urban and rural areas. For instance, "in urban Kenyan schools, Kiswahili is nominally the mother tongue, whereas in rural areas, Kiswahili is considered a subject" (Piper and Miksic, 2011:23).

postcolonial national Asian languages are the languages of majority alike in Africa, but they are known for their age-long written traditions, which helped them survive under colonial rules (Prah, 2018). After gaining independence many Asian states took steps to strengthen their national languages. While most of them were distancing from European imperial legacies, some e.g., Russian, Arabic, Chinese, established their own empires (Stolz, 2015).

The language empires can be observed even in some European contexts (e.g, Spain, the UK (Seixas, 2017; Griffiths, 2021)), which makes it difficult to talk about "typical" language (de)colonisation there, although recently more authors have been concerned with decolonisation of European language education worldwide (e.g., Meighan, 2021; Herlihy-Mera, 2022; Bauamer and Bourdeau, 2022; Costa-Silva, 2024). The research has been documenting the emotional voices raising the issues of language rights, language shift and attrition, but these are mainly about minoritised Asian and European languages such as Sami, Aragonese, Ryukyuan, Irish, Yupik, some languages of China, India, Indonesia and Nepal (e.g., Fjellgren and Huss, 2019; Gimeno-Monterde and Sorolla, 2022; Hammine, 2021; Mac Ionnrachtaigh, 2021; Morgounova Schwalbe, 2021; Phyak, 2021; Nakagawa and Kouritzin, 2021; Roche et al., 2023), as it seems uncommon that a representative of a major titular ethnic group in a state X, where Xish/Xese/Xian/Xic is a sole major national language, would not be fluent in it and (struggle to) study it as L2 in an X's public[9] school and university. At the same time, my life experience shows that such representatives exist in a post-Soviet Uzbek context, which makes it imperative to look closely at the post-Soviet space.

[9] The private and international schooling provide different linguistic experiences.

2.2.1.4 Post-Soviet context[10]

The post-Soviet space is not uniform in terms of language policy, which is rooted in early Soviet nativisation politics. For Bolsheviks, different ethnic groups within the USSR were at different stages of development as nations (Slezkine, 1994), which was an obstacle to achieve Bolsheviks' main goal - creating a uniform socialist nation (Hajda, 1993). The literacy rates as well as the level of national self-consciousness were the major factors for imposing the language reforms on those people. For instance, high literacy rates of Baltic countries achieved before joining the USSR (Grenoble, 2003) were the reason why their Latin-based alphabets were not cyrillised, whereas high level of national self-consciousness was the reason why the national languages of Transcaucasian republics enjoyed a higher status than Russian even in Soviet times (Whitney, 1978). Additionally, the Soviet Russification endeavours, namely so-called "Russian settler colonialism" (Morrison, 2016:337) were the most successful in the European part of the Soviet Union, especially in Ukraine and Belarus, whose national languages are very similar to Russian (Slezkine, 1994). In contrast, the degree of Russification in Transcaucasia and Central Asia except Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was significantly smaller (Kolstø and Edemsky, 1995).

After the collapse of the USSR most of the states chose to distance themselves from Russia and strengthen the status of their titular languages, but some (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus) gave Russian the status of an official language (Pavlenko, 2006). Further attempts to decolonise national languages can be seen in changing alphabets from Cyrilic to Latin, which happened in Moldova, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Sebba, 2006). Recently Kazakhstan decided to launch the alphabet Latinisation campaign too (Kumar, Vaigorova and Rakhmykul, 2022). Others either never had Cyrillic script (Georgia, Armenia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) (Alpatov, 2017) or did not

[10] The linguistic situation within the Russian Federation will not be part of this discussion.

change it after gaining independence (Ukraine, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

Additionally, serious changes occurred in the educational spheres of the former Soviet republics in terms of non-Russian medium of instruction. The national revival along with the large outflux of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers from the former Soviet republics, including Central Asian ones, made the instruction in national languages stronger and more spread (Pavlenko, 2006), although Russian-medium instruction still exists in many post-Soviet states, including Uzbekistan, and is quite popular even among their titular nationals (e.g., Bezborodova, 2023). In such schools, titular nationals study their titular national language as L2.

Until recently the research on the national languages of the former Soviet countries has not been concerned with the combination of decolonisation and people's feelings shaped by learning a post-Soviet national language as L2. These issues have been addressed separately and include but not limited to the prestige of the Russian language in the post-Soviet space (Tyson, 2009), ineffective teaching of Kazakh language to English-speaking learners (Zhumasova et al., 2023), the accompanying emotions of "disappointment, indifference, concern, fear, dispossession" from learning Ukrainian as a foreign language (Tsurkan et al., 2020:130), the challenges of developing/maintaining multilingualism in Kazakh society (Koptleuova et al., 2023) and Lithuanian families (Markova, 2019). Importantly, all the above-mentioned publications on second language acquisition are concerned with the post-Soviet national language education in general and for foreigners, but never for the major titular nationals.

However, the situation changed after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The linguistic awakening is one of the largest social outcomes of this war, which is witnessed not only in Ukraine but in Kazakhstan and even Belarus, the closest neighbours of Russia. This is evident from Belarusians' "emotional desire to distance from Russia and Russians as far as possible" through reevaluating their attitudes to Belarusian language (Liskovets, 2023:4), the rise of Kazakh language

activism and movement in Kazakhstan (Smagulova, 2023; Leydiker, 2023), the acknowledgement of Ukrainian needs to be supported given a huge migration within and from the country (Shramko et al., 2023) and the shift in language attitudes favouring Ukrainian and protesting against Russian (Teslenko, 2023). However, the emotions are used there in more of an encompassing way with no attempts to somehow theorise their effect. In contrast, Tarasova (2023), used Kraschen's affective filter theory to analyse the emotional aspects of L2 acquisition by Ukrainian university students. There she speaks about anxiety experienced by the students in light of the current war, which serves as an obstacle to pass through the affective filter and thus, prevents them from learning L2. However, it remains unclear whether she means learning English as L2 or generalises her findings to any L2 including Ukrainian. Even if she means the latter, it shows the interplay between decolonisation, L2 learning and accompanying emotions in unpeaceful conditions only. Additionally, Kraschen's affective filter hypothesis does not have the appropriate theoretical tools to connect L2 learning emotions and decolonisation. Thus, the interaction of these aspects remains largely unexplored and will be tackled in my research.

Having explored the post-Soviet setting in terms of national language acquisition, decolonisation and related emotions, I left the detailed characteristic of the Uzbek context for Chapter 3. Nonetheless, even from this brief overview it is evident that the linguistic situation in the post-Soviet Uzbekistan is in some ways similar, but in some ways different to those of other post-Soviet countries. In turn, this makes it worth exploring the emotional experiences and (de)colonial perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as L2, which will be done in this study.

2.3 The overview of contemporary research related to second language acquisition, language decolonisation and emotion

The originality of contribution to knowledge is not only about the unique geographical and sociopolitical context, but also about holding broader significance (Baptista et al., 2015). Thus, it is imperative to consider the research development in the areas of my interest. The following subsections showcase where I position my research, summarise the key research venues existing in the

overlapping areas of second language acquisition (SLA), language decolonisation and emotion as well as identify the gaps in knowledge relevant to my study.

2.3.1 SLA and language decolonisation

The research on SLA had not been concerned with coloniality and related issues for decades before a sociocultural shift occurred in this field in the 1990s (Chen and Lin, 2023). Starting from then, the overlap between SLA and language decolonisation gained considerable scientific interest (e.g., McIvor, 2020), which resulted in better understanding of the impact of colonialism and its consequences on language learning (e.g., Migge and Leglise, 2008; Jahan, 2024). The scholars in this field argue that colonial pasts contributed to the development of language hierarchies by giving different languages different statuses, powers, capitals and scopes of use, which affected the attitude to them in postcolonial realities (e.g., Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 2002; Igboanusi and Peter, 2004; Migge and Leglise, 2008; Brenziger, 2017; Macedo, 2019).

The contemporary research in this field is also concerned with the issues related to decolonising language pedagogies, namely their development and application. The researchers (e.g., Ortiz, 2009; Chew, Leonard and Rosenblum, 2023; Phyak et al., 2023) argue that such pedagogies unveil hidden coloniality and empower minority language learners by introducing their languages in the curriculum and teaching them in culturally appropriate ways, not leaning on the dominant language ideologies. The latter, especially at the intersection with identity, represents a separate research venue. The literature (e.g., Gu, 2010; Norton and Toohey, 2011; McKay, 2013; Lou, 2021; Meighan, 2023) about it argues that: 1) prevailing language ideologies often promote the notion that certain "standard" languages are superior, leading to the marginalization of non-standard or Indigenous languages; 2) influence language education and determine who is deemed successful in mastering a particular language; 3) impose pressure on individuals to adhere to the standards of a dominant language, which can diminish their self-esteem and adversely impact their cultural identity.

Additionally, the contemporary research in frontiers of language decolonisation and SLA seems to pay particular attention to the issues of language revitalisation and maintenance (e.g., Fishman, 1991; Fettes, 1992; Reyhner and Tennant, 1995; Maurais, 1996; Kirkness, 1998; McCarty, 2008; Hinton, 2011; King and Hermes, 2014; Stacey, 2016; Johnson, 2017; Green and Maracle, 2018; McIvor, 2020), which is crucial in case of many endangered local languages of Africa, America and Oceania (see subsection 2.2).The main argument in this research is the need of multifaceted strategy, which encompasses the reclamation of linguistic heritage, the incorporation of Indigenous viewpoints, the empowerment of communities, the adaptation of SLA methodologies, the examination of power dynamics, and the promotion of multilingualism. The later along with translanguaging is most intensively researched now (e.g., Ortega, 2019; Duff, 2019; Wei and Garcia, 2022).

At the same time, some areas in this field relevant to my research are still largely unexplored. First, there seems to be more literature on the theoretical aspects of decolonising language education than on empirical studies (e.g., MacSwan and Rolstad, 2024), which can, for example, explore the effect of (the lack of) decolonial approaches in language education on linguistic proficiency and self-perception. Second, the overlapping area of SLA and language decolonisation requires more nuanced research on intersectionality with identity characteristics (e.g., ethnicity) (Norton and De Costa, 2018), and how the environment of language learners affects their experiences of language learning in general (Reinders, Lai and Sundqvist, 2022) and postcolonial language learning, in particular. Finally, contemporary research in this field is largely dominated by the Western scholars (Selvi, 2024). They are rigorously analysing and striving to reform SLA practices to more effectively adhere to decolonisation principles, with the goal of fostering language learning environments that are fairer and more inclusive. Although it is important to recognise that research from scholars representing Global South is in itself not likely to be a panacea for understanding decolonial dynamics in former colonies, more of Global South perspectives, especially those of language educators, activists and learners from Asia, America, Africa and Oceania, are important to include in conversation. All the

above-mentioned points make it very timely to explore the emotional experiences and (de)colonial perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as L2 that will be done in this study.

2.3.2 SLA and emotion

In contrast to the interest of SLA researchers in language decolonisation, their fascination with emotion and affect started almost a decade earlier - in the 1980s. Now SLA researchers view emotion and affect as a central component of language acquisition (e.g., Dewaele, 2010) influencing both the process and results. Perhaps, the largest body of research in this field is concerned with the investigation of emotional factors in language learning.

Studying emotions and affect in SLA has begun with the applied research on language learning anxiety (e.g., Horwitz, 1986) and motivation (e.g., Gardner and Smythe, 1981; Dörnyei, 1994), two domains that have been of scientific focus consistently for almost three decades. However, as time went by, the interest shifted towards exploring the factors other than anxiety and motivation. For instance, it has been empirically determined by Teimouri (2019) that guilt fosters SLA, whereas shame inhibits it.

Interestingly, the desire to strengthen the language learning motivation and to minimise/control the related anxiety along with addressing students' well-being resulted in a greater heed paid to positive emotions and their impact on SLA in the 2010s. The interest in this so-called positive psychology direction in language learning (MacIntyre, 2021), has brought a resumed and dynamic effort to the exploration of advantageous aspects of such positive sentiments as language learning delight (e.g., Zheng and Zhou, 2022; Resnik and Schallmoser, 2019; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014), confidence and self-assurance (e.g., Goetze and Driver, 2022), trust in own abilities (e.g., Mercer, 2011; Young Kyo, 2021), teachers' and students' welfare (e.g., Gregersen et al., 2023). These have resulted in broadening the sphere of research on the affective issues of SLA.

Speaking of the emotional component of SLA, it is imperative to discuss the impact of informal education on it. The issues of ethnic identity and the attitude

to ancestral language are known to be hugely influenced by family and community environment, especially when the ancestral language is different from the language of instruction at school/university (Schalley and Eisenchlas, 2020). Maintaining both languages at a good level, so-called harmonious bilingualism, is important for learners' well-being, but very often the children's language of instruction replaces the ancestral language at home, which is sometimes enabled by parents, making children more emotionally distant from their families (De Houwer, 2020). Additionally, it is said to cause anxiety and avoidance of speaking the ancestral language causing its low proficiency (Sevinç, 2020).

Furthermore, it has been shown that for children's self-identification with a certain ethnicity it is crucial for their families to maintain a corresponding language at home (Tseng, 2020). A high proficiency in the ancestral language helps communicate effectively with extended family members and avoid intergenerational challenges (Purkarthofer, 2020). Although very often it is parents who choose a certain family language policy (Curdt-Christiansen and Huang, 2020), the children also demonstrate agency in terms of their linguistic choices contributing mainly to familial bilingualism, as maintaining the language of instruction is no less significant for them, as they do not want to be excluded from a wider environment (Smith-Christmas, 2020).

As a matter of fact, the research on SLA and emotions underwent an interesting pathway of ongoing examination of new systems of methods (e.g., MacIntyre, 2012; Driver, 2021), from distinctive approaches (e.g., Iida, 2012) and with a growing number of interested parties involved in the SLA process (e.g., Sudina et al., 2021; Martin, 2023). The challenges offered by globalisation as well as the SLA research initiatives keep erasing the existing borders of the field. They continue adding novel viewpoints, feelings and epistemologies, ensuring better connection with well-being and social justice (Zhou et al., 2021; Mercer and Gregersen, 2023).

Despite the increasing number of researchers concerned with the affective dimensions of SLA that allows exploring many factors and conditions and analyse their impact on language learning settings, the publications in the field seem not

to address such issues as the variety of different language acquisition environments and sociolinguistic features of language learners. Existing literature is mainly about the situations in classroom-based settings, whereas not much is known about SLA emotions experienced beyond the formal educational contexts (Driver and Prada, 2024). However, learning about such experiences can help improve language acquisition.

Additionally, one can ask about how valid and applicable the existing empirical findings are internationally, because Western educational settings have received the greatest attention in the related research. Much of the existing literature has been concerned with learners of English as L2 or representatives of Western cultures (Driver and Prada, 2024) such as Italy (MacIntyre and Vincze, 2017), Romania (Pavelescu and Petric 2018; Dewaele and Pavelescu 2021), Hungary (Piniel and Albert 2018) and Canada (Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele, 2018). Thus, more research concerning different cultural and linguistic profiles of language learners is needed to shed light on how such characteristics link up with emotions in SLA. Hopefully, my study with its non-Western context and focus on the emotional experiences and perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as L2 not only in the classroom-based settings will address the above-mentioned gaps effectively.

2.3.3 The emotional aspects of language decolonisation through SLA

The research on the emotional aspects of language decolonisation through SLA is not as large. Nonetheless, there exists some literature devoted to the affective aspects of language revitalisation and the difficulties experienced by persons who learn a language within systems undergoing decolonisation. Below I will touch upon some important works in this field.

One of the key issues researched in this area is emotional connection to language. Few studies (e.g., Goodin, 2015; Hinton, Huss and Roche, 2018) have investigated the emotional connections experienced by the representatives of Indigenous peoples to their heritage languages and the damaging effect of language loss and the challenges of revitalisation attempts. For instance, there

have been studies of such emotions as embarrassment, loss and pride that accompany the processes of language revitalisation and shift (e.g., Low, Mcneill and Day, 2022; Hamley, 2023).

Another issue that gained interest of scholars in this field is language trauma and healing. A number of researchers have demonstrated trauma experienced by representatives of different generations within the same family and beyond, which occurred as a result of domination of imperial languages over Indigenous languages (e.g., Khawaja, 2021; Napier and Whiskeyjack, 2021). Works in this field show how language revitalisation endeavours can lead to trauma mending and recovery of Indigenous inhabitants and their culture (e.g., McKenzie, 2022; Whalen et al., 2022).

One more aspect explored in this field is language anxiety and self-perception. The researchers (e.g., Nee, 2021; Lane, 2023) have studied language anxiety and its effect on language learners along with the lack of confidence, atelophobia, and negative self-image. These findings are significant to consider when trying revitalising language, because they can be helpful for learners to claim back their heritage languages in emotionally secure conditions (e.g., Achilles, 2018).

Community support and empowerment represent another venue of research in this field. The related studies have highlighted the essence of community assistance and empowerment in language revitalisation efforts as well as the importance of emotional help systems, intergenerational learning, and communal identity-construction (e.g., Wiltshire, Bird and Hardwick, 2021; Sallabank and King, 2022; Susemihl, 2023). A deep knowledge of the affective aspects of community action can illuminate the development of culturally appropriate language revitalisation approaches.

Additionally, some works in this field are devoted to language ideologies and stigma. Researchers (e.g., Lee, 2009; Madhukar et al., 2023) have studied different doctrines, beliefs and misconceptions about Indigenous languages,

comprising negative cliches, linguicism[11] and the wide-spread views about the lower status of Indigenous languages. Explorations in this direction point out at the affective obstacles to revitalise languages and demonstrate the necessity to confront systemic injustices and power imbalance.

Besides the above-mentioned issues, contemporary research in this field is also concerned with language revitalisation narratives, identity and intersectionality. The first consists of qualitative works that have explored personal and communal stories of language revitalisation, including individual accounts of language acquisition experiences, challenges, successes, and the emotional importance of language revitalisation for communities and individuals (e.g., Meek, 2012; Fine, 2021; Flegg, 2024). The second cover works at the intersection of identity, SLA and language decolonisation that explore how language learning encounters overlap with other sides of identity, the most important of which for my research is ethnicity, and how such an interplay develops emotional responses of people to attempts aiming at revitalising languages (e.g., Hinton, 2013; Lesher, 2015; Huang and Chan, 2024).

Although the research on the affective dimensions of language decolonisation through SLA seems to gain momentum in recent years, there are some underexplored areas in this field. First, as it stands out from the above-analysed literature, the emotional encounters of Indigenous individuals trying to revitalise their languages seem to be the main focus of the research in this field. Thus,

[11] In the 1980s, Skutnabb-Kangas coined the term “linguicism” to define linguistic discrimination as follows: “ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups defined on the basis of ethnicity/culture/language” (Skutnabb-Kangas in Soler and Rozernvalde, 2024:16).

more studies should be conducted to demonstrate diverse perspectives, including those of non-Indigenous people.

Second, in spite of the growing attention to contextual variables including community action, academic guidelines and power changes, more systematic research is needed to understand their effect on emotional encounters of SLA under various conditions, which can be considered as a more nuanced/advanced research agenda than that mentioned in subsection 2.3.2. In connection to this, it has been already mentioned that formal educational settings remain the predominant context of such research (Driver and Prada, 2024). Hence, more empirical studies about informal language learning environments such as family and wider social circles should be conducted.

Third, although it is widely acknowledged that emotion, identity and language in combination cause idiosyncratic learning experiences, more explicit studies are needed to investigate how personal characteristics (e.g., ethnicity) link up with language decolonisation and SLA emotions. This gap is common for both fields: SLA and language decolonisation, and SLA and emotion (see subsections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2), so, logically, it is still present when these two fields overlap. Additionally, it is important that the related research findings can be incorporated into the language policies and planning, given their “pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape, influencing the linguistic profile of students [...] through inclusion-exclusion processes where language acts as a key discriminating factor” (Iazetta, 2024:17). Therefore, there is a need in such applied research that could enable language decolonisation through SLA-mediated emotions. Filling these research voids is planned to be achieved by exploring the emotional experiences and (de)colonial perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as L2, which will be done by answering the research questions of this study. This can advance our understanding of the affective aspects of language decolonisation through SLA and be instrumental in developing more productive approaches aiming at language decolonisation in different cultural and linguistic environments.

2.4 Social justice implications

After having showcased where I position my research, it is important to consider the social justice implications in the field. Arguably decolonising is very much about social justice, because “the materialisation of social justice, on the one hand, and the discrediting and dismantling of the lasting effects and contemporary manifestations of […] capitalist colonialism, on the other hand, are inseparable.” (Tejeda, Espinoza and Gutierrez, 2003:12). However, it is imperative to explain what the similarities and differences between them are and how this might work in practice.

Speaking of their similarities, firstly, it is fairness and equity that are a common matter of interest for decolonisation and social justice (Santos, 2014). Both deal with and attempt to solve the problems related to discrimination (e.g., racial, gender etc.) established due to some systemic and historical reasons. Secondly, decolonisation and social justice engage with the criticism of power imbalance maintained by exclusive and oppressive hegemonic narratives, social and political frameworks (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018). Thirdly, it is their transformative intentions (Tuck and Yang, 2012) that go beyond the adjustments within the existing systems, aiming at their complete restructuring. Finally, both advocate for historically excluded groups, prioritising and valuing their insights (Freire, 1978). In language education practice, the similarities between decolonisation and social justice approaches are evident from viewing the following as problematic: 1) associating languages with wealth and poverty; 2) epistemicide, which is the suppression of knowledge systems required for the language to thrive by controlling aspects such as “planning, status, acquisition, domain expansion, teaching materials, and literary production” (Roche, 2019:4); 3) perpetuating feelings of inferiority, awkwardness (e.g., due to dialectal peculiarities), and lack of esteem (e.g., due to misconceptions that some languages are deficient in certain ways) (Roche, 2019). Logically, addressing these implications will enable both social justice and decolonisation.

At the same time, there are some significant differences between decolonisation and social justice. Firstly, in contrast to decolonisation, social justice has a

broader focus on systemic inequalities, regardless of whether they originated from colonialism or not (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Secondly, they differ in scope. Decolonisation often aims at independence and cultural resurgence, which include but not limited to Indigenous language revitalisation, strengthening Indigenous cultural practices and cultural resistance. In contrast, social justice emphasises an inclusive access to societal benefits and protections (Simpson, 2017). Finally, they differ in the aspect of epistemology. While decolonisation emphasises the reframing of knowledge production to honour Indigenous and non-Western perspectives (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018), social justice embraces diverse ways of knowing and does not necessarily seek to overturn established knowledge systems (Fraser, 2009).

The differences between decolonisation and social justice, especially the second and the third one, can demonstrate in practice how one can create problems for another. Thinking that decolonisation itself can be a source of social injustices, Lee (2023:187) argues:

> "…decolonial scholarship is prone to sterile theorisation, historical fixity, and an overt romanticisation of the Global South. Specifically, the tendency for decolonisation movements to descend into nationalism, nativism, and civilisationalism provides provocative insights on epistemic justice… [There are] examples of Indigenous knowledge that reinforce inequality based on race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. As more individuals with hybrid identities (race, culture, and nationality) enter [the decolonisation path], it is imperative that decolonisation moves beyond reductive categories of identity that reproduce stereotypes."

Additionally, when trying to understand the concrete situations when decolonisation and social justice do not go hand in hand, it is worth considering the critique that some decolonial thinkers received. For instance, Mignolo's (2003, 2009b, 2011) reductionist vision of the world as "West" and "non-West" does not reflect its complexity failing to account for the intertwined and hybrid histories that shape both, the heterogeneity of both, and aggravating marginalisation (Táíwò, 2022). Additionally, Fanon's (1963) decolonisation focus

on violent revolution calls for a conflict with complex and ambiguous consequences (Scott, 2004) including perpetuated injustices (Memmi, 2021). Another critique is regarding wa Thiong'o's (1986) complete rejection of European languages, which along with strengthening the position of Indigenous languages can limit the access to valuable information, adversely affect individuals' professional growth and well-being (Mbembe, 2015). All these aspects are worth considering when language learning takes place in order to see whether it promotes decolonisation and/or disadvantages learners. In connection to this study, it will be especially interesting to see how this manifests in the Uzbek context. I will address this issue in the next chapters.

2.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I summarised the key trends in language education, decolonisation and emotions globally. Following this, I outlined some key areas in contemporary research on SLA, language decolonisation and emotions, identified some gaps, as well as talked about the social justice implications of decolonisation. My main argument here was that the acquisition of a postcolonial national language as L2 and the language of majority by the representatives of this majority, its decolonisation and related emotions have been underexplored, under-theorised or studied separately and never in combination. Additionally, some social injustices can be redressed by decolonisation (Roche, 2019), but some will appear as a result of it (e.g., Lee, 2023). Bearing this in mind, it seems reasonable to see whether a similar situation can be observed in the Uzbek context. How had Uzbek been developing under Russia? What is the role of top-down and bottom-up approaches to decolonise Uzbek, and what challenges are they accompanied by? How has Uzbek language been taught? To what extent is the related educational research concerned with emotions? To what extent is teaching and learning Uzbek as L2 disadvantageous? These issues are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: National language development, acquisition, decolonisation and emotions: Uzbek perspective[12]

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines a historical context in which Uzbek has been developing and taught as L2 for the last 150 years in Uzbekistan. It also talks about its current position in Uzbekistan as a result of historical events that occurred over this period as well as the attempts to alter this position. With this in mind, first, I consider the time under Russia as historical conditions, which affected the Uzbek language development. Second, I will do the same for the years of Uzbek independence, paying close attention to the top-down and bottom-up approaches to decolonise Uzbek language. Third, I will look at the coloniality-related challenges in the contemporary Uzbek context. Fourth, I will critically evaluate the information regarding Uzbek language education in terms of coloniality and equity. Finally, I will examine the existing sentiment research in the field of Uzbek language learning. My main argument here is that similarly to the global perspective outlined in Chapter 2, the experiences and perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek language as L2 and the language of majority, its decolonisation and emotions have been studied separately and never in combination.

3.2 The development of modern Uzbek language under Russia

Uzbek is a Turkic language that has a long history and literary tradition (Rasulova, 2021). However, when talking about how Uzbek spoken today has developed, one should consider the last 150 years of Uzbek history. The most part of this period falls on the time under Russia. Today there is no lack of views

[12] Uzbekistan is home to different languages. This chapter is about the major one, Uzbek. The situation with other languages of Uzbekistan, which include but not limited to Karakalpak, Tajik, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen is undoubtedly important, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

on coloniality of Russian imperial and Soviet periods for Central Asian countries and their titular languages. All these points in relation to Uzbek language will be discussed in detail below.

Without a doubt, the Russian Empire viewed Central Asians as its dependent subjects and implemented policies of assimilation and exploitation of local resources and goods in a typical colonial fashion (Brower, 2012). Furthermore, the Russian language played a significant role in ensuring the loyalty of the local population to the Russian imperial power, which was achieved through the education of young locals in Russian (Hofmeister, 2016). This practice continued during the Soviet era, where Russian was promoted as the unifying language of the state in various aspects such as politics, economy, education, and the military (Myakshev, 2015). However, in 1989, only 24% of ethnic Uzbeks were fluent in Russian (Tyson, 2009), and ethnic Russians made up just 8.3% of the total population of Uzbekistan (Dietrich, 2005). Therefore, describing the Russian colonial regime in relation to ethnic Uzbeks and the Uzbek language as exterminational or genocidal is clearly an exaggeration.

Although the Russian language was one of the main tools for establishing subordination to the Russian metropole, it would be incorrect to say that the role of the local languages in this process was insignificant. In fact, Russian imperial officials were often criticised by their government for their reluctance to become proficient in Central Asian languages, as they were unable to navigate the complexities of the local legal system, which was difficult to comprehend (Arapov, 2005). Conversely, Russian scholars and linguists made significant contributions to the study, development, and teaching of Uzbek language (Lukashova, 2021). It goes without saying that without their passion for their research subjects (local languages), all of this research would not have been possible. They initially began publishing newspapers and journals in local languages, which never happened before, to disseminate the ideology of the Russian empire (Khalid, 1994). Ironically, it was Russian orientalists who introduced the European concepts of nation and national language to colonised Central Asia, thereby catalysing the emergence of a nation-building narrative among the local intelligentsia, which did not previously exist (Tolz, 2005).

Interestingly, the local intelligentsia (e.g., jadids) started developing their national self-awareness as a response to the flawed theories of certain Russian scholars regarding nation-building processes in Central Asia (Abashin, 2008). However, differing in their approaches, both Russians and the locals undertook tremendous endeavours to develop a more refined and modern national language (Tuna, 2002). These endeavours were not only feasible but also encouraged during the Soviet era, when each ethnic group that achieved nationhood status was granted their own territory and agency (albeit limited by the Soviet narrative) to develop their national identity. The Uzbek people were granted these rights, and in 1924, the UzSSR (Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic), a constituent republic within the USSR, was established. The following two decades were dedicated to the development of the Uzbek language for the newly-formed state (Fierman, 2009). This period involved extensive work and debates on modernisation and the standardisation of the written form of the Uzbek language.

The Uzbek script underwent its first change from Arabic to Latin in 1929 and then from Latin to Cyrillic in 1940. These changes are often seen as harmful for the Uzbek people, who not only lost access to their rich cultural heritage but also many talented, intelligent, and loyal individuals who fought for and against these reforms (Egamberdiyev, 2022). However, it would be inaccurate to portray the Uzbek people and their language as passive victims of the Soviet reforms, entirely lacking any agency, because the Uzbek intelligentsia (e.g., jadids) actively participated in this process (Bobomurodova, 2022).

In fact, in 1929, the Uzbek language received an alphabet that fully represented its unique linguistic features and greatly contributed to combating illiteracy in the country. It was based on the peripheral Kipchak dialects of Uzbek and included vowel harmony, as well as rules for adapting loanwords to Uzbek spelling, stress, and pronunciation (Fierman, 1985). However, some members of the Uzbek intelligentsia opposed this alphabet and used their influence to remove vowel harmony from the standard Uzbek language, which was not characteristic of the language spoken in major Uzbek cities, known as the ambassadors of Soviet power (Uzman, 2010).

In the late 1930s, the project to latinise the Uzbek script was halted due to difficulties and widespread resistance, particularly in preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Russian language. There was also concern about the increased loyalty of Soviet Turkic ethnic groups to Turkey (Garibova, 2011). It was believed that only the Russian language could serve as an intermediary in intercultural communication (Shelestyuk, 2019).

Consequently, in 1940, the campaign to switch the Latin script to Cyrillic began, resulting in the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet for many ethnic groups within the USSR. The new Cyrillic-based alphabet was based on the Karluk dialects of the Uzbek language and did not include vowel harmony. Additionally, all loanwords had to be incorporated into the Uzbek language through Russian, adhering to Russian spelling, stress, and pronunciation (Boehmer, 2007). These norms were officially documented in the 1956 orthography standards, which are still in use today.

Despite the evident colonial subordination of Uzbek language to Russian, the accepted standards reflected their era and served effectively for the next 20-30 years. However, after that they became outdated (Ibragimov, 1973), and now the Uzbek language is nearly half a century behind, struggling to represent the postmodern reality (Alimdjanov, 2019). The prioritisation of local languages was never a focus for the Soviet government, whose ultimate aim was to create a socialist nation with Russian as the main language. At the same time, there were no direct attacks on the Uzbek language (Ismailova, 2001). Notably, in 1989 (a few years before the dissolution of the USSR) Uzbek was granted the status of a state language of Uzbekistan in response to criticism regarding the position of the native language in the republic, but this criticism was encouraged from the centre (Gorshenina, 2021).

3.3 Uzbek language development during the years of independence

In 1991 Uzbekistan gained independence and began implementing its own language policy. Turkey had a significant influence on it, which is why in 1993 the process of converting the Uzbek alphabet to Latin script commenced. In

1995, the alphabet was changed, reflecting the cooled relations with Turkey and the strengthened ties with the US. The subsequent delay in the alphabet reform, as well as the entire process of modernising the Uzbek language, is often associated with the serious socio-economic challenges in the country that led to a reestablishment of connections with Russia (Kosmarskii, 2003). Some researchers (e.g., Schweitzer, 2020) believe that unresolved script and language issues are still utilised by the Uzbek government to maintain a balance between key players in the region: Russia and the West. While this fact may serve as a prime example of postcoloniality in action, it also suggests that Uzbekistan is not lacking agency in its purpose-driven, language-mediated political trajectory. At the same time, there have been some top-down and bottom-up approaches to decolonise Uzbek language.

3.3.1 The top-down approaches to decolonise Uzbek language

Besides the above-mentioned incomplete alphabet Latinisation reform, no longer recognising Russian as a language of interethnic communication in Uzbekistan (Pavlenko, 2008) and opening the Tashkent State University of Uzbek language and literature (Zaripov, 2020) almost nothing has been done to strengthen the position of Uzbek in Uzbekistan during Karimov's era (1991-2016). The nationalistic rhetoric in Uzbekistan around the Uzbek national language did not go beyond positioning Uzbek as a source of national pride, a sacred language of the nation, which everyone should respect and save for the next generations, but very little was done to realise these statements (Asanov, 2020a). In contrast, recently the governmental activity in the field of language policy and planning has increased considerably both inside and outside of Uzbekistan. This can be seen from: 1) the agreement with Taliban on the continuous development of Uzbek language in Afghanistan (Murodqulov, 2021); 2) the establishment of "Vatandoshlar" (Compatriots) fund supporting "events aiming at the preservation and development of Uzbek language" (UzDaily.uz, 2021) abroad; 3) the law "on further increase the effectiveness of fundamental and applied research in Uzbek language and literature" (2020); 5) the law "on the establishment of the Uzbek language Day" (2020); 6) the law "on measures to radically increase the prestige

and status of Uzbek language as the state language" (2019) (Zaripov, 2020: 167-168).

The acceptance of the later law in 2019, in turn, can serve as another piece of evidence that for the last 30 years the prestige of Uzbek language has not been sufficiently high. It also puts into question the necessity of governmental efforts to support the Uzbek language outside the country, when the situation with it in Uzbekistan requires much closer attention. Furthermore, according to Zaripov (2020:169), the current issues of Uzbek language policy and planning include: 1) "controlling the other languages influence on Uzbek language in globalization context; 2) increasing Uzbek language prestige, expanding its use scope; 3) committee formation to issue instructions on the terms use from Uzbek and foreign languages; 5) improving the Uzbek language electronic platform; 6) Uzbek language translation into technology and internet language; 7) control over Uzbek language use; 8) violations prosecution of Uzbek language; 9) resolving language issues through public discussions among Uzbek people."

This list of actions summarised from the existing legislation clearly lacks the point about the role of education in this process. This along with the arguments above suggests that the top-down/government-led approach to the Uzbek language policy and planning since 1989 has been ineffective, although the government has been trying harder recently. How about the bottom-up/community-led approaches, which are generally associated with the social activism known to be no less contributory to the language revival in different contexts (e.g., Kaplan, 2005; Hornberger et al., 2018)? This will be outlined in the next subsection.

3.3.2 The bottom-up approaches to decolonise Uzbek language

The literature (e.g., Sallabank, 2005; Liddicoat and Baldauf, 2008; Trinick, May and Lemon, 2020) suggests that the bottom-up strategies are applied predominantly for endangered and minority languages. However, Uzbek does not belong to either category in Uzbekistan, because there are 35.3 million people living in Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan population, 2023) and 28 million of them

speak Uzbek (Uzbekistan state language, 2023). If Uzbek is so widely spoken, what exactly is the problem?

Although it looks from this statistic as if it is thriving, the field experts (e.g., Alimdjanov, 2019) argue that Uzbek has not become a language of modernisation and power in Uzbekistan because: 1) Russian is strongly supported by the country intelligentsia and elite, and knowing only Uzbek is often associated with underdevelopment; 2) Uzbek is almost absent in the scientific circulation, it became a language of "plain folk"; 3) today's Uzbek language is the product of the soviet regime, which limited its application to national literature, folklore and translations of the world heritage, and this has not changed much; 4) although Uzbek is taught in schools, preserved in arts and television, they still largely reproduce the knowledge and forms of Uzbek constructed in Soviet times, keeping it non-permeable for modern concepts and unusable for discussing serious issues. Nevertheless, the fact that Uzbek is so widely spoken, along with the valuable observation that "Uzbek society, being traditional, easily rejected ideas and practices considered "alien"" (Asanov, 2019:73) explain well the lack of bottom-up approaches to language policy in planning in Uzbekistan noted by Catedral (2017), although their co-existence with top-down strategies is said to be important for the successful implementation of language policy and planning (Kingsley, 2009).

3.3.2.1 Social movements and digital activism in the field of Uzbek language decolonisation

In connection to agency as a counter-argument for viewing (post)coloniality of Uzbekistan and Uzbek language at different historical periods exclusively in subordination terms, it is worth noting the presence of social activism in this field. Besides the above-mentioned jadids, who contributed enormously to the development of Uzbek language until the 1930s, more recent Uzbek history is full of other examples. I will discuss them below.

In October 1989 a huge meeting organised by the opposition party "Birlik" ("Unity") in the central plaza of Tashkent [the capital city of Uzbekistan],

demanding that Uzbek be granted the status of the state language (Asanov, 2020a). At that time, the Soviet Uzbek government met the crowd's demand, leading to the adoption of the law on the official status of Uzbek language, thereby winning over the supporters of "Birlik" (Kosmarskii, 2009). Shortly after gaining independence, the new Uzbek government, primarily composed of former Soviet leaders, hailed the jadids and their progressive cultural heritage as national heroes (Lyons, 2003), effectively depriving the opposition of the opportunity to exploit them for their own advantage.

A similar utilisation of ideas, resulting in a decline in the opposition's following, occurred in 1993 when the government of independent Uzbekistan initiated the transition from the Cyrillic-based Uzbek alphabet to the Latin-based one (Kosmarskii, 2009). This originally was the brainchild of the "Erk" ("Freedom") movement (Uhres, 1996), which was formed by certain former members of "Birlik" (Fakhritdinov, 2002). Both movements' initiatives aimed to decolonise Uzbek language by eliminating its subordination to Russian and challenging the dominance of colonial knowledge systems established in Uzbekistan, including the Cyrillic script. However, the appropriation and continuation of these ideas by the Uzbek leadership, who "adopted and continued" "the colonial power structures" (Betts, 2012:14), hindered their complete implementation.

In addition to the afore-mentioned physical social movements, it is important to note the presence of Uzbek digital activism connected to Uzbek language. Among the major issues raised by the digital activists are language cleansing (Asanov, 2019), reforming Uzbek language, deinstitutionalising Russian influence on Uzbek pronunciation and vocabulary/terminology, transitioning from Cyrillic to Latin-based script, simplifying its grammar, and liberalising the pronunciation and orthography to reflect all dialectal diversity of Uzbek language in writing (as it used to be in the pre-colonial times) (e.g., Asanov, 2017). These matters are full of decolonising ideas.

Although there is much evidence of agency that Uzbek people have been demonstrating in relation to Uzbek language (de)colonisation, there is no research data on how ordinary ethnic Uzbeks have been managing or failing to

maintain their Uzbek language proficiency on an individual basis. Namely, did they try to learn Uzbek language, and what did they do to learn it in such discouraging (post)colonial conditions? This represents an important gap that I will address in my research.

3.4 Postcolonial challenges in Uzbek context

The challenges of postcolonialism in the Central Asian context are further exacerbated by the reality that numerous native Central Asians (Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Tajiks), excluding nationalist and religious intellectuals, are unwilling to acknowledge the Soviet era as colonial or identify themselves as previously colonised (Laruelle, 2009). In contrast, according to Laurelle (2009) and Glushchenko (2022) referring to the works of Uzbek historians in the 1990-2000s, Uzbekistan as a state and the official Uzbek historiography viewed the time under Russia as colonial. Interestingly, Gorshenina (2021) says that the official decolonial rhetoric in Uzbekistan has softened since 2016 or possibly become accessible only in Uzbek. Although it can be assumed that the Uzbek officials and academia influence this perception of the past and present, it does not mean that Uzbeks do not have critical thinking, which, at the same time, might be heavily affected by “the colonial era […] that […] deliberately suppressed critical thinking in the colonies.” (Moosavi, 2020a:300)

Indeed, the contemporary views are nuanced and account for different perspectives on coloniality, but they give no opportunity to reconcile the former coloniser and the colonised, especially in the field of postcolonial language struggles. As the Uzbek academic community has recently started accepting more and more ideas developed by the Western scholarship on postcolonial matters (Gorshenina, 2021), it will logically take a while before it comes to equilibrium with the Soviet heritage and gains its own voice in global science. Needless to say, the continuation of the current rhetoric aiming to surpass postcoloniality (to decolonise) will kill the very hope for a holder of Russian colonial legacy to learn Uzbek language. To find an appropriate theoretical lens, through which to view this problem, and to seek its practical solution are important, but would be impossible without considering educational and

emotional aspects of teaching and learning Uzbek, which I will do in the next sections.

3.5 Teaching and learning Uzbek as L2: past and present

It is important to mention that the formal system of teaching and learning Uzbek as L2 was put in place by Russians (Nazarova, 1992). Surprisingly, Russian people were the first teachers of Uzbek as L2 (Lukashova, 2021). Thus, along with epistemicide, some new systems of knowledge have been created, but this can be always contested with the fact that ethnic Uzbeks would probably never study their ancestral tongue as L2 if no one colonised Central Asia. Nevertheless, the current formal European-styled system of teaching Uzbek as L2 is older than that of teaching Uzbek as a L1. Although teaching through L1 and L1 literacy instruction has existed in Central Asia for centuries (Yuldasheva, 2021), Uzbek as a separate school subject with the purpose of consolidating the nation through the standardised language was introduced only in 1933 (colonial times) (Muhitdinova, 2016).

In contrast, the first mention of teaching Uzbek as L2 is dated to the 1880s, when Nalivkin, a Russian orientalist, organised Uzbek language courses in Russian-native schools, in the Turkestan teachers' seminary and for Russian soldiers, which were said to be quite effective (Lukashova, 2021). Nalivkin was also the author of the first phrasebooks and tutorials for learning Uzbek as L2 (Ibid.) The Russian way of teaching Uzbek was largely based on comparing the structures of the two languages, which was well-developed by another Russian orientalist, Polivanov (Uzoqov, 1972). His works later also became the scientific basis for teaching Russian as L2 in Uzbek-medium educational settings (Leont'ev, Rojzenzon and Xajutin, 2017), which was made mandatory in 1938 (Myakishev, 2015).

Importantly, ethnic Uzbeks represented only 1% of the student body of Russian-medium educational settings in Soviet times (Silver, 1974). Now more than 90-95% of the student body in Russian-medium schools and university courses are ethnic Uzbeks (Usmonova, 2022). Thus, more and more people of non-Russian

ethnic origin started being educated in Russian from their early years, and they studied their ancestral tongue at school and university as L2 (Liddicoat, 2019).

Notably, during the Soviet time the teaching of Uzbek was carried out almost analogically to Russian language teaching (Yuldasheva, 2021). If in 1925-1970 the main purpose of teaching Uzbek was to establish its literary norms through teaching Uzbek alphabet and grammar, in the 1970-1990s the main emphasis was said to be on developing oral and written language (Ibid.). Teaching and learning all of these became a real priority only in relation to Russian as L2 in Uzbek-medium schools and university courses, since the USSR's government worried about the low level of Russian proficiency among Uzbeks, which would hamper achieving their ultimate goal of creating a consolidated socialist nation (Seiden, 2022). Logically, teaching Russian as L2 had the greatest governmental support, although the efficiency of the corresponding measures taken was ambiguous. On one hand, they contributed to the development of Uzbek–Russian bilingualism in Uzbek society, on the other hand, they were questionable in terms of the monolingual teaching approach employed, which ignored the importance of referring to students' L1 (Shorish, 1988).

It is imperative to say that the state program of teaching Uzbek as L2 developed in 1994 (after Uzbekistan gained independence) was basically a translation of the Soviet programme for teaching Russian as L2 in Uzbek-medium settings (Eshmurodov, 2018). It can be only speculated that this might be done with the hope of achieving Uzbek-Russian bilingualism among those who studied Uzbek in Russian-medium educational settings similar to that achieved in Soviet times in Uzbek-medium schools and university courses. However, regardless of why it has been done, it raises the point of perpetuated coloniality.

Notably, until recently the research on bilingualism in Uzbekistan has been focusing mainly on developing Russian as L2 in Uzbek-medium settings, whereas the issues of developing Uzbek as L2 in Russian-medium schools and university courses still remained largely unexplored. The past research in this field intensified only in the 1960s (Yusupov, 2021) and focused only on comparing Uzbek and Russian grammars, enhancing the Uzbek language skills

of native Russian speakers, expanding their lexicon, instructing them on the art of creating written content (Muhitdinova, 2016), teaching them their field-related terminology, and applying modern pedagogic and computer technologies in Uzbek lessons (Yusupov, 2021). The contemporary problems related to teaching and learning Uzbek language as L2 are primarily discussed in short communications of Uzbek language experts and Uzbek language instructors, who are concerned with the literacy development issues (e.g., Sharopova, 2019, Mukhitdinova, 2023), familiarising with Uzbek culture in multilingual environment (e.g., Murtazoyeva, Qurbonova and Niyozova, 2020, Ergasheva and Tursunova, 2020), integrating L1 and Uzbek language education (e.g., Siddiqov, 2020, Esanova, 2020), perspectives of using literary texts in Uzbek language teaching (e.g., Rajabov, 2020), teaching Uzbek to foreigners (e.g., Isroilova, 2020, Turg‘unova, 2020, Ergasheva, 2022), improving the existing teaching methods (e.g., Davronov, 2020, Maksudova, 2020), importance of incorporating modern linguistic research (e.g., Bakhronova, 2020, Raupova, 2020), pedagogical concepts (e.g., Yusupova and Kurbanbaeva, 2023) and technologies in Uzbek language instruction (e.g., Badalova, 2020, Ktaybekova, 2023).

These purely pedagogical concerns with no connection to postcolonial theory coexist with the bigger issues raised by some Uzbek digital activists. For example, the Uzbek language currently faces unresolved challenges with its alphabet, lacks clear spelling conventions, standardised assessment, and terminology. The existing systems are colonial in nature, as they continue to be influenced by the former imperial language (Russian) or the standards established during the Soviet era. The delay in the government's decisions on these matters creates more anxiety than attraction towards learning Uzbek (Asanov, 2021b).

Another significant issue is the excessive state control over the Uzbek language. By monopolising the production of Uzbek language textbooks (Asanov, 2021c) as it occurred in Soviet times, and imposing numerous taboos (e.g., on gender issues and politics) that restrict discussion and research by society and academia, respectively, the state obstructs the free development of the Uzbek language (Asanov, 2021b). These oppressive mechanisms adopted during the

Soviet era discourage the learning of Uzbek, which is perceived as a language of underdevelopment.

Furthermore, most of the current resources for teaching and learning Uzbek are inadequate. This diminishes the motivation to study Uzbek and poses a hindrance to the growth of the relevant field (Asanov, 2021b; Asanov, 2021c), demonstrating the continuous epistemicide. Additionally, in an attempt to avoid the disdain and discomfort associated with the language (a remnant of colonialism), Uzbek people exhibit a lack of national self-awareness and unwillingness to collaborate for the advancement of the Uzbek language. This is further compounded by Uzbek officials learning Russian to enhance their careers (Asanov, 2021b), and the subpar quality of education in local schools and universities, which provides little incentive to learn Uzbek (Asanov, 2021a). While all these factors are important to consider when examining the reluctance to decolonise the learning of a state language, the experiences and perspectives of Uzbek nationals who are learning Uzbek as L2 - key participants in the educational process and language decolonisation – are overlooked.

3.6 Research on emotions and attitudes towards Uzbek language learning

To the best of my knowledge, there is very limited research on opinions, attitudes and emotions of Uzbek language learners, be them native Uzbek speakers or L2 learners. This includes Kosmarskii's (2009) investigation of how convenient the use of Uzbek Latin script is for Uzbek university students learning through Russian. Despite the revealed loyalty as well as politically and economically explained opposition of different research participants to the Uzbek Latin script, the data analysis excluded the responses of ethnic Uzbeks, which represents a limitation in the research. This gap has been addressed by Schweitzer (2020) who explored scriptal preferences of different age groups of ethnic Uzbeks. Although some political and socio-economic issues explaining the scriptal preferences have been identified, this research lacks the consideration of the educational aspects of the problem. Moreover, both papers are limited to the script issues, although language learning is not only about script.

Another somewhat relevant paper in this field is Zhao's (2022) study on the linguistic choices of Uzbek students. Although this research offers valuable insights into attitudes towards the Uzbek language and the circumstances in which it is the preferred linguistic choice and how it impacts students' identities, it is limited to multilingual research participants, most of whom are native Uzbek speakers. Moreover, the main outcome of this research, namely, "My heart is Uzbek," appears to stem more from belonging to the Uzbek ethnicity or sharing Uzbek identity than from studying the Uzbek language in an educational setting and the associated emotions. Additionally, the connection to decolonisation and relevant theories is also absent, highlighting another gap that needs to be addressed.

3.7 Summary

A careful consideration of Uzbek context suggests that, similarly to the global context, the acquisition of Uzbek as L2 and the language of majority by the representatives of this majority, its decolonisation and related emotions have been under-theorised or studied separately and never in combination. The role of emotional experiences and perspectives of Uzbek nationals in learning Uzbek as L2 remains largely unexplored with no particular attempts to explain their connection. This highlights the requirement for conceptualisation that links language decolonisation with emotions, which will be covered in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Underpinnings

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I identified the main attributes of coloniality of a postcolonial language, including those of Uzbek. I also showed how Russian retains its power in post-Soviet Uzbekistan and why it is still a more preferable linguistic choice for education in Uzbekistan. The literature review also demonstrated that the research into positions of Uzbek language in Uzbekistan is mainly concerned with its historical, political and socio-economic aspects, whereas the research into teaching and learning Uzbek as L2 has never been concerned with emotions and injustices the learners experience in this process and how they might affect Uzbek language decolonisation. This shows the importance of having a theoretical lens that a) can show the effect of different factors on the emotional experiences with SLA and the resulting injustices in postcolonial contexts, and b) help better understand decolonisation of a postcolonial state language of the majority at the individual level, taking into consideration L2 learner's agency, self-perception and interactions within formal and informal educational settings. These thoughts give a rationale for the conceptual framework of my research, which I will present below. I will start the chapter by outlining L2 emotions and positive psychology model and its relevance for my research. I then will discuss the concept of pedagogies of discomfort before addressing the research concerning affective decolonisation and decolonising pedagogies. I use this literature to better explain the connection between learning Uzbek as L2 and Uzbek language decolonisation from an emotional standpoint.

4.2 L2 Emotions and Positive Psychology Model

L2 emotions and positive psychology model (see Figure 4.1) is proposed by Shao et al. (2020) as a framework "triangulating emotion theories and research in the fields of psychology, education, and SLA" (Ibid., 1). It is based on a humanist essence of positive psychology theory aiming at self-actualisation, prosperity and

well-being (Seligman, 2011). It is also aligned with holistic learning theory, which according to Johnson (2023:4):

> "…recognizes the interconnectedness of all human dimensions, including intellectual, emotional, physical, social, imaginative, and transpersonal dimensions. Real learning is said to have occurred only when all dimensions are addressed. Holistic learning theory also recognizes the interconnectedness of all things including self, others, and one's environment."

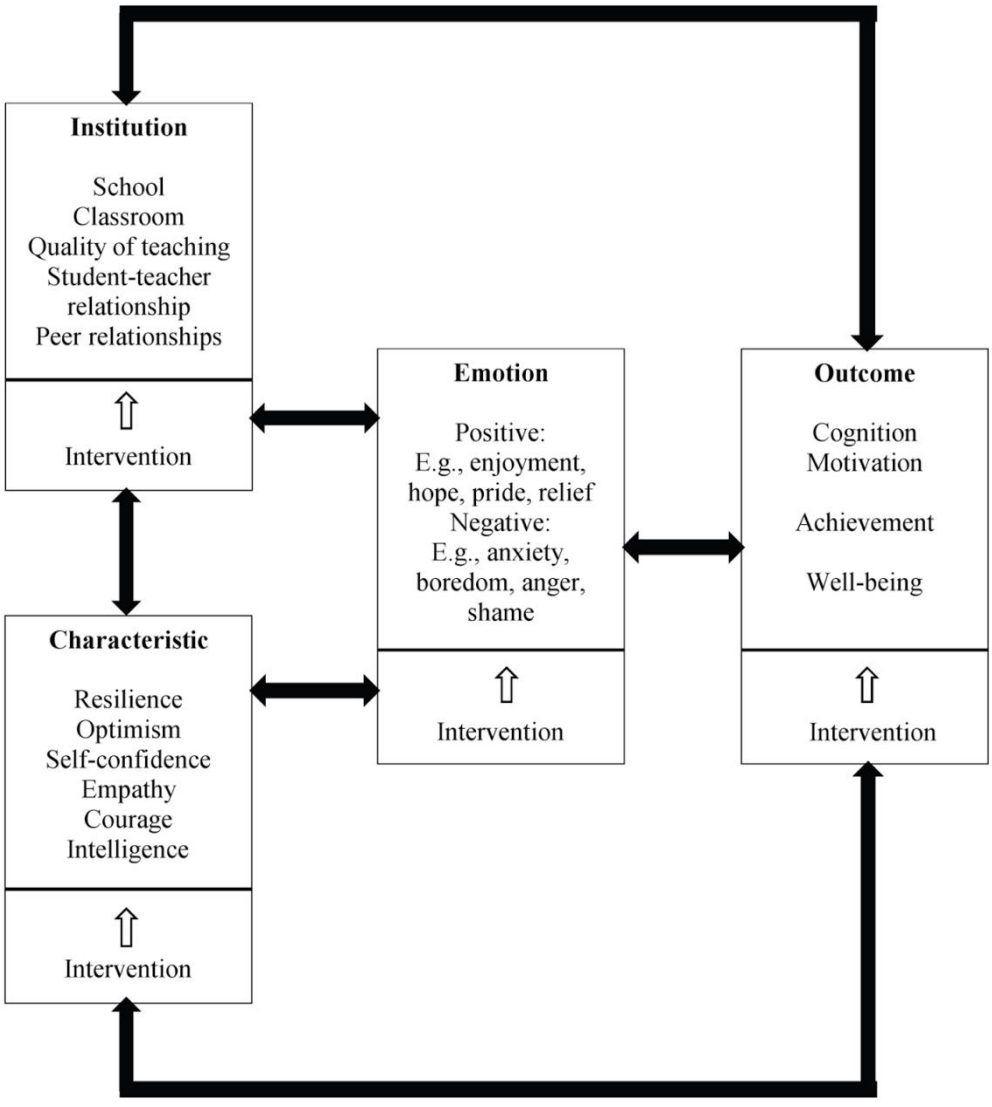

Figure 4.1. An L2 Emotions and Positive Psychology Model

As suggested by the model (see Figure 4.1), environments/institutions are able to influence the learning characteristics of individuals, which in turn affect their emotions about language learning. For instance, an institution's atmosphere characterised by positive relationships between teachers and students is able to nurture such positive traits of learners as self-reliance and hopefulness that presumably foster such positive feelings as delight of studying, aspiration, and gratification. These feelings can also influence the processes involving motivation and cognition in SLA and ensuing attainment, which eventually has an impact on psychological well-being. Similarly, learners' mind-body interactions are able to affect their motivation, cognition, and language attainment that may affect their language acquisition feelings differently, for instance, successful outcomes might make positive feelings even stronger and their lack would generate negative feelings (e.g., worry, embarrassment, and apathy) (Shao et al., 2020). "Different emotions can then influence students' learning characteristics such as curiosity and perseverance, which will impact features of the learning environment, such as teachers' design and selection of language tasks and materials." (Ibid, 5-6)

Their model is supported by a number of empirical findings (e.g., Arens et al., 2015, Frenzel et al., 2018, Wei et al., 2019), which makes it instrumental for evaluating teaching and learning practice. In the case of my research, it is evaluating the experiences of learning Uzbek as a L2. Further explanations for applying the parts of L2 emotions and positive psychology model in my research are presented in the sections below.

4.2.1 Environments/Institutions

The model authors concur with Pekrun (2006:325), who sees the importance of environments/institutions in "delivering information related to controllability [of learning by students] and [its] academic values." Such environments are said to be shaped by enhancing cognitive and motivational quality of educational settings, encouraging cooperation and autonomy of learners, setting clear learning objectives and providing constructive feedback that cultivates the achievement value in students (Pekrun et al., 2007). In my research, the concept

of environments/institutions allows the evaluation of the input of formal (school, university) and informal (family, peers, friends, colleagues, private language courses, wider environment) Uzbek language education to the development of linguistic proficiency and the attitude to Uzbek language nurtured by emotional experiences rather than purely economic, political and historical factors, as it has been shown in the literature review.

Focusing entirely on the contribution of environments/institutions to Uzbek language acquisition would not be correct, because we cannot undervalue the importance of learner's agency for SLA. At the same time, overlooking them is not right either, because language is not an individual but a social phenomenon, which cannot survive without communication with a wider environment be it family, school, university, private course, friends or colleagues. Additionally, such neglect will not help keep the environments/institutions accountable for an individual's SLA. For example, an Uzbek language exam demonstrates different levels of Uzbek language proficiency of two students. Although such results can be due to different individual learning characteristics, they can also be rooted in unequal opportunities for language practicing within students' close social circles or inequitable approaches at educational settings. To address the latter, interventions would need to create a supportive, trustful, welcoming and engaging learning environment, regardless of individual learning characteristics (Gabryś-Barker, 2016).

4.2.2 Characteristics

Shao et al's (2020) model implies the importance of individual learning characteristics for emotional experiences related to SLA, which comprises another key construct of the theoretical framework to be used in my research. The model authors draw on theorists Fredrickson (2001) and Pekrun (2006), who suggest that positive emotions exemplified by the model (see Figure 4.1) are significant factors that positively affect cognition and emotional well-being. These propositions have been supported by a number of empirical studies (Seaton and Beaumont, 2015; Wei et al., 2019; Li, 2020). The reciprocal relationship between

individual characteristics and emotions was also shown to be valid (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012; Dewaele et al., 2019).

Importantly, Shao et al's (2020) model suggests that individual characteristics can shape and be shaped by environments/institutions. Accounting for both individual and contextual factors is certainly an advantage of their model, as it does not view language learners as passive victims of the existing language education systems. At the same time, the environmental influence can unleash learners' potential (Jin and Zhang, 2018), restrict its realisation or cause the development of such individual emotions and traits that would inhibit language learning (Komarowska, 2016).

In my research, the concept of individual learning characteristics will be extended to include some non-learning features, which will allow evaluating the input of ethnic identity, self-perception of coloniality and agency (decisions/choices and attempts to learn Uzbek independently) to development of Uzbek linguistic proficiency and the attitude to Uzbek language nurtured by emotional experiences rather than purely economic, political and historical factors, as it has been shown in the literature review. This extension seems valid, given the established influence of ethnic identity, and self-perception of coloniality on language learning (Trofimovich and Turuševa, 2015; Abdullah and Wong, 2017). Including this concept in a conceptual framework of my research is important to see how injustices related to teaching Uzbek as L2 is manifested on the individual level as well as how different people respond to these injustices. These can be of use for policymakers and interventionists who might come up with practical solutions to redress the injustices.

4.2.3 Outcome

In addition to environments/institutions and individual learning characteristics, SLA-related emotions may also shape or be shaped by learning outcomes, as suggested by Shao et al's (2020) model. They draw on an idea of the indivisibility of academic attainment and well-being (Seligman et al., 2009), with emotions being a crucial part of the latter. The empirical research behind it suggests that

positive emotions are key precursors of desired motivational and cognitive outcomes (Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005; Fredrickson and Joiner, 2018), whereas negative emotions may result in both adverse and pleasant learning consequences (Pekrun and Perry, 2014). The reciprocal relationship between SLA-related outcomes and emotions was also shown to be valid (Lee, 2014; Shao et al., 2020a).

In my research, the concept of outcome will allow evaluating the input of achievement, overall level of Uzbek language proficiency and the attitude to Uzbek language gained over years of studying it formally or informally based on the emotional experiences rather than purely economic, political and historical factors, as it has been shown in the literature review. A focus on outcome is significant because it may assist in understanding why people succeeded or failed to learn Uzbek. For instance, unable to speak Uzbek on daily topics after years of studying this language at school and university, people may simply give up and stop trying to. Alternatively, not knowing exactly what level of Uzbek is needed to get a certain job; people will simply not feel it is necessary to gain Uzbek language proficiency. Both cases would argue for the implementation of change in the current Uzbek language education system.

4.2.4 Emotions

Emotions are central to Shao et al's (2020) model, and their centrality was said by the model authors to be adopted from the positive psychology conceptualisation. Although "[t]he PP [positive psychology] movement has contributed to the "emotional turn" in the field of SLA" (Dewaele and Li, 2020:45), it has received a number of critiques and criticisms. van Zyl et al. (2023) identified 117 unique critiques and criticisms related to various aspects of positive psychology. Addressing each of them profoundly would require a longer dissertation, so I will consider the most relevant one to my research, namely the "[u]sefulness of negative emotions/experiences ignored" (Ibid., 8).

Importantly, Shao et al.'s (2020) model addresses this criticism. Instead of focusing separately on positive and negative emotions affecting language

acquisition, they “provide a more ‘balanced’ approach to the study of emotion in SLA” (Ning, 2022:1100) and recognise “that there is no absolute distinguishment of good and bad between positive emotions and negative emotions, and that both can have positive or negative effects” (Yu, 2022:5). What this model truly lacks is the connection to decolonisation, which is an important part of my research. Besides not mentioning decolonisation, it focuses on monolingualism (an acquisition of one particular target language) or at least does not specify the consideration of multilingual approaches, which is known as a sign of decolonisation failure in postcolonial contexts (Ndlangamandla, 2024). Using Shao et al’s (2020:11) notion of “cross-fertilisation of new ideas” said in regard to their model, implying its possible co-enrichment with other theories, I am going to address this issue by supplementing it with some ideas from the pedagogies of discomfort, which are at the core of decolonial approach (Zembylas, 2018)

According to Porto and Zembylas (2020:359), negative emotions and discomfort in particular “are important in challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain stereotypes and social injustice, and in creating openings for empathy, solidarity and transformation.” They suggest “that foreign language teaching can and should also sensitise students about [these] issues” (Ibid., 356). Thus, the concept of negative emotions bridges Shao et al’s (2020) model and pedagogies of discomfort. In the following sections I will give an overview of pedagogies of discomfort, demonstrate their connection to decolonisation and complete the conceptual framework of my research.

4.3 Pedagogies of Discomfort

First conceptualised by Boler in 1999 and then further developed by Zembylas (Mills and Creedy, 2021), pedagogies of discomfort “is understood as a pedagogical framework that engages students and teachers with difficult issues by troubling the participants’ emotional comfort zones” (Porto and Zembylas, 2020:359).

> “Pedagogies of discomfort consist of three crucial tenets that make them valuable in handling difficult issues [...] in the language classroom: (a)

> They pay explicit attention to the role of affects and emotions in the classroom, which includes pedagogical activities that do not provide comfort to students but rather challenge dominant beliefs, social habits, and normative practices that sustain racial and other stereotypes and social injustice, (b) they use students' discomforting feelings as opportunities to deal with traumatic events by creating safe spaces in which students can process their discomfort productively, and (c) they cultivate students critical consciousness and affective capacities for action by engaging in pedagogical activities that create openings for empathy, solidarity, and transformation" (Porto and Zembylas, 2022:329).

Thus, it is assumed to achieve transformation as a result of discomfort from critical evaluation of established beliefs, norms, practices and hidden injustices (Zembylas and McGlynn, 2012). The feeling of discomfort may be contributed to by various emotions such as guilt, anger and fear, which, if critiqued by individuals, may unveil their privileges and adherence to dominant ways of thinking that they have never been cognisant of (Boler and Zembylas, 2003). Thus, people stop being merely spectators in relation to others but start feeling accountable for how they see each other (Boler, 1999).

Zembylas (2015) is aware that such an approach raises lots of ethical issues regarding its implementation and underlines the importance of tackling them thoughtfully and skilfully. At the same time, he argues that it is over-prioritised well-being but not discomfort that will increase the probability of continuous power imbalance and unequal stature (Zembylas, 2013). Moreover, it has been highlighted that "some discomfort is not only unavoidable in relation to difficult issues but may also be necessary, as long as discomfort is handled not only critically but also strategically" (Porto and Zembylas, 2020:359).

In connection to language learning, it is imperative to say that Porto and Zembylas (2020a:313) support the idea of viewing it as having not only "instrumental but also educational purposes, amongst which is the development of democratic and peaceful societies." "[T]he development of democratic and peaceful societies" is particularly important given that "linking the language

learning that takes place in classrooms with civic or social community engagement as an integral component of language education, is currently at the forefront" (Ibid.). Logically, 'civic or social community engagement' cannot happen fully without diving into some difficult matters, which language learning assisted by pedagogies of discomfort should reflect. As a result, a person will develop a mind-set and emotions concerning a moral way s/he sees self and others (Zembylas, 2010). Thus, it can be said that Zembylas views discomfort as an important tool to learn a language of not 'abstract' but real people with real problems. In other words, if learning a language involves learning a community of its speakers, discomforting a learner with that community's problems will help him/her learn that community and, hence, its language better.

Additionally, there exists a reciprocal relationship between language learning and discomfort. For instance, reading literary texts can contribute to building discomfort through "enabl[ing] readers to live other lives–by proxy" (Kramsch, 1995:85), visualising a horrible reality of others (Porto and Zembylas, 2020), or simply contemplating painful matters/events perused (Hållander, 2015) and making ethical considerations about them (Boler, 1999). Moreover, foreign language learning is said to result in cultural humility, an understanding of one's difference and cultural limitedness (Nussbaum, 2010), which can be discomforting too (Moon and Sandage, 2019). At the same time, it is said to help treat the difference appropriately (Nussbaum, 1998).

Having undertaken some empirical studies related to language learning, Zembylas and colleagues (Porto and Zembylas, 2020, 2022; Charalambous, Charalambous and Zembylas, 2016; Charalambous et al., 2020) have demonstrated the importance of discomfort from putting on someone's shoes for language learning, and hence, the potential for social transformation. These include discussions of the Holocaust in an English class (Porto and Zembylas, 2022), reading literary texts about death, suffering and human right abuse in a higher education language course (Porto and Zembylas, 2020). Additionally, the research has also demonstrated how unresolved social justice and insecurity issues can adversely affect language learning practices (Charalambous, Charalambous and Zembylas, 2016; Charalambous et al., 2020). Notably, out of

the issues discussed there is no language decolonisation in a language learning classroom, which would be extremely valuable for my study. However, such a discussion seems very compatible with pedagogies of discomfort, which have been also shown by Zembylas (2018:98) to be applicable "to address white discomfort" - "a social and political affect that is part of the production and maintenance of white colonial structures and practices" (Ibid., 88). Recognising the broad context of its manifestation, avoiding its naive sentimentalisation that brings again the emotions of white individuals to the centre of attention, and promoting solidarity with sufferers of colonialism are suggested to make pedagogies of discomfort more critical and decolonising (Zembylas, 2018). Building on these, Zembylas (2022) develops the conceptualisation of affective decolonisation that I am going to describe next.

4.3.1 Affective Decolonisation

By now it should be clear that the notion of white discomfort[13] represents the connection between pedagogies of discomfort and decolonisation. In the next

[13] White discomfort is an umbrella term that includes but is not limited to such emotions as denial, anger, fear and guilt of whites (Zembylas, 2018). I will be using this term more as a feature of colonialism than racism, as the latter is not the focus of my research. Although historically colonialism is more often associated with the European white race, it is important to bear in mind that "[w]hiteness is not tied essentially to skin colour" (Barnett, 2000:10). It "is fundamentally a relational concept rather than something residing in an individual or group, [which] maintains power ultimately by reserving for itself the privilege of recognizing, defining, and denying difference on its own terms and to its own advantage" (Ibid). These are supported by the fact that "people may be granted or denied whiteness depending on context" (Moosavi, 2022:133). Additionally, today we can observe non-European whiteness, for example, in India, Turkey (Arat–Koç, 2012) and Japan (Ching, 2023). As for Uzbek and Russian whiteness, which are more relevant for my research, the first one, to my best knowledge, remains unexplored, whereas the second one, especially its racism-related aspect, is a much more controversial issue in the

two paragraphs I will explain the relationship between decolonisation and affect. For this, I will draw on the conceptualisation of affect provided by the affect theorists.

Indeed, Zembylas (2018:88) defines white discomfort as “a social and political affect”. It “is the product of encounters in specific socio-political contexts, [which] emerges as part of specific affective conditions, processes, events, and relations” and tends to be avoided “in favour of comfort” (Zembylas, 2023:196). However, what is affect?

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1988, 1994, 2004), affect is a measure of influence a body can exert on others or accept from others. The relationships between bodies are said to be determined by how affects flow between them and get attached to those bodies (Ahmed, 2004, 2012). Such an attachment results in embodied emotions and practices, which can include racism, slavery and coloniality (Cvetkov, 2012). Since “[w]hite discomfort has been primarily explained in terms of Whites’ unwillingness to scrutinize their personal advantages and privileges” (Zembylas, 2018:87) “in favour of comfort” (Zembylas, 2023:196), and therefore, perpetuating colonial practices, it can be definitely called an affect.

The fact that a practice is informed by affects implies a performative rather than existential feature of the latter, and hence, their transformative potential for a social change (Grosz, 2004, 2005), an example of which can be decolonisation. Following this logic, change in affects or affective change will cause the alteration/discontinuation of corresponding practices, which makes an affect a promising area to start decolonisation. However, why should decolonisation start at its affective level?

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contemporary scholarship (Yusupova, 2021) than Russian colonialism, and hence, might overcomplicate the interpretation of my research findings.

Although it is widely accepted that decolonisation is a complex process that occurs at various levels, there are concerns that it may only occur superficially or in a narrow sense. Firstly, decolonisation is difficult or even impossible to fully implement, given the deep and entrenched roots of colonialism over time. Secondly, it oversimplifies and generalises the concept of the "Global South", which is not uniform in nature, thus perpetuating colonial exclusion and neglecting diversity. Thirdly, decolonisation tends to romanticise the achievements of the "Global South" while demonising the "Global North" and rejecting its contributions. Finally, decolonisation often takes on a tokenistic form (Moosavi, 2020b).

In response to these limitations, Zembylas (2022) proposes a framework that promotes more effective measures to achieve decolonisation. His conceptual contribution aims to highlight the importance of considering the affective/emotional dimension of decolonisation, which is relevant to my research. Viewing education as a transformative medium where affects can "enable new ways of feeling and being with others, beyond what is already known" (Zembylas, 2021:5), he emphasises the significance of the following in implementing decolonisation in higher education more effectively:

"to recognise the complex and "difficult" emotional histories of colonisation" (Ibid., 16);

"to nurture affective practices of decolonising solidarity" (Ibid., 16);

"to inspire actions in everyday encounters that create new affective conditions which challenge the coloniality of affects" (Ibid., 16);

The first point can be achieved by experiencing emotional dissonance or discomfort with the on-going colonial practices, and more importantly, by desiring to feel such discomfort. This will serve as an initial step towards emotional solidarity as decolonising solidarity, which involves "a deeply affective process that entails refocusing its goal on the affective practice of working against colonisation, namely, on relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, between former coloniser and colonised peoples, between

privileged and marginalised communities" (Ibid., 12-13). Clearly, decolonising solidarity is not a natural sentiment for everyone, so it needs to be nurtured, which leads to the second point of Zembylas's (2022) framework.

The second point is said to be achieved by implementing the teaching methods of decolonising solidarity that should be creative, transitive and relational. The interconnectedness of such teaching methods is based on “a deliberate commitment to a relational stance” (Ibid., 14). Their transitive nature implies an active position towards others. In turn, their innovation is based on utilising artistic or other unconventional approaches “that might challenge and rearrange the colonial logic embedded in everyday encounters”, and “might rearrange and reinvent our relationships in the classroom” (Ibid., 14). Clearly, in order for lessons to be effectively learnt, regular practice is necessary, which leads to the third point of Zembylas's (2022) framework.

The third point is said to be achieved not through dialogue and contemplation but through performing emotional labour that fosters understanding and empathy towards the colonial struggles of Indigenous people, which, however, should not be "from a position of privilege" (Ibid., 15). The emotional labour is considered important for both uncovering the hidden network of colonialism, which has permeated various aspects of human life, and for challenging the emotions of the privileged. Zembylas (2022:15) acknowledges that “it cannot be determined a priori what kinds of actions might be effective at a given moment to undo the emotive lessons of coloniality, because this depends on the particularities and complexities of local desires and needs.” Nevertheless, these actions should result in "reinventing our relationships [with the colonised] and affective practices in the ... classroom and beyond to become witnesses of affective decolonisation" (Ibid., 15).

Additionally, it is worth paying attention to how Zembylas views possible prioritisation of decolonisation over social justice (Barreiro et al., 2020). He uses Canada and South Africa as examples of countries where decolonisation should be a priority; however, he does not exemplify the countries where social justice should be prioritised (Ibid.). Regardless of the huge difference in percentages of

Indigenous people in each of the countries above, their similarities comprise the fact that they "had been long self-governing" (Hopkins, 2008:212), so the decolonising ideas among their population had a chance to crystallise and gain strength over years, which might explain the prioritisation of decolonisation in those societies. Given that Uzbekistan has been independent only for 33 years, it is interesting to explore the level of injustice in Uzbek language education and based on that, suggest whether decolonisation should be prioritised over equity in Uzbek society. This is worth considering especially because decolonisation does not always go hand in hand with social justice and may take exclusive, violent and/or reductionist path, failing to promote reconciliation and to support diversity, perpetuating inequalities and limiting opportunities (see subsection 2.4). My research will be instrumental in shedding some light on these issues.

Zembylas (2022) framework addresses some important elements (decolonisation, emotion, education, social justice) of my research, utilises appropriate theoretical concepts (e.g., discomfort, decolonising solidarity) to describe the phenomenon, and explains the connection between them and education. I can also see how the ideas of discomfort and decolonising solidarity can be applied to frame my research. Both can serve as key indicators of why some Uzbekistanis embraced and learnt the Uzbek language in the postcolonial era while others did not.

4.3.2 Criticisms

It is worth noting that Shao et al's (2020) and Zembylas's (2022) approaches are relatively new and have not been largely critiqued. To the best of my knowledge, Shao et al's (2020) model has not received any published critique yet. Its only limitation relative to my research is the lack of connection to decolonisation, which I have identified earlier.

As for Zembylas's (2022) approach, Tight (2022:8) calls it "long-term and incremental" although admits that "it might be more practical." However, his criticism can be easily opposed by the fact that colonialism itself was not established in one day, and logically, combatting its consequences cannot be

fast. This was the only direct criticism found, nonetheless, the concepts of discomfort and decolonising solidarity used in Zembylas's (2022) approach have been shown previously as bringing some challenges.

Perhaps, the strongest criticism of pedagogies of discomfort that can be equally applied to affective decolonisation is the difficulty of their practical implementation. Boler (2004:123) admitted this limitation by saying:

> "I am learning to accept that people will not go where they don't want to go. For understandable reasons, students may not welcome the invitation to rethink their worldviews in ways that disrupt and shatter their comfortable status quo. Inevitably, each semester, I find myself encountering my own emotional investments and reactions to students who dig in their heels and blatantly refuse to engage in critical thinking."

Additionally, Morris (2020: 456) points out that "the challenge of working in solidarity with Indigenous peoples is reorienting our approach away from avoidance of settler uncertainty or solidarity as a type of settler identity, and towards decolonisation as a practice that includes nurturing a habit of discomfort." Indeed, this is practically difficult or even impossible both for learners and teachers to achieve, which would be true if we considered learners as entirely lacking any agency. However, the latter is far from reality, not to say that agency can be promoted by teachers through feedback, creativity and inquiry (Vaughn, 2020).

A language learner's agency is also known to be influenced by emotions, as they attach meaning to learners' choices and decisions (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). However, discomfort as an emotion can either encourage agency by showing an inspirational example or discourage it by building anxiety and creating "conditions over which students may have little to no control" (Zembylas, 2023:197). The latter is said to be prevented by enabling solidarity (Ibid.) Moreover, Shao et al's (2020) model (see Figure 4.1) to be supplemented with Zembylas's conceptualisation of discomfort, solidarity and decolonisation, holds the notion of

agency as one of the individual learning characteristics, so can help address this criticism.

Another point missed by Zembylas (2022) and his forerunners (e.g., Land (2015)) is that “the solidarity… between marginalised groups can facilitate a strong decolonisation movement in which white voices may not be necessary at all (Abawi and Brady, 2016:982).” Although this observation is valuable, it does not hamper the application of Zembylas’s (2022) theoretical framework to my study context. This remark would be valid in an American or Australian context where the European settlers represent the majority of the population, whereas Indigenous minorities are marginalised. In the Uzbek context, ethnic Uzbeks constitute the majority of the population and cannot be called marginalised.

Furthermore, I have noticed that the ideas of discomfort and decolonisation are often discussed by Zembylas and colleagues (e.g., Porto and Zembylas, 2020; 2022; Zembylas, 2022) in the context of higher education, hence, overlooking the importance of applying this type of pedagogy not just in colleges but much earlier: in primary and secondary schools. If the related pedagogies start being applied at an earlier age, certain problems might be avoided. This point is closely connected to another one, namely the lack of accountability of informal educational settings such as family, private courses and wider environment for developing discomfort and decolonising solidarity, especially given the role these environments/institutions play in language learning. However, Shao et al’s (2020) model (see Figure 4.1) to be supplemented with Zembylas’s conceptualisation of discomfort, solidarity and affective decolonisation, holds the notion of environments/institutions, so can help address this criticism.

Interestingly, none of the researchers have criticised Zembylas’s (2022) framework for addressing only the former colonisers. His notion of “standing with” is addressed only to the former colonisers, which seems to be an ongoing focus of research concerned with decolonising solidarity (e.g., Kluttz, Walker and Walter, 2020). The former colonisers should feel discomfort. They should demonstrate decolonising solidarity. They should stand with the Indigenous

people. In other words, is it assumed that the Indigenous people are all united in terms of decolonising solidarity? This assumption will be checked in my research.

4.4 Theorising the Connection between SLA and Language Decolonisation

Despite SLA and decolonisation having been extensively researched and conceptualised from the perspective of affect/emotion, insufficient attention has been paid to establish the relationship between language learning and language decolonisation. For instance, Zembylas with colleagues (Porto and Zembylas, 2020, 2022; Charalambous, Charalambous and Zembylas, 2016; Charalambous et al., 2020) demonstrates the connection between language learning and affect/emotions through discomfort. He also shows how decolonisation and affect/emotions such as discomfort and solidarity are related (Zembylas, 2022). However, his affective decolonisation framework has not been applied to understand language decolonisation from an emotional standpoint.

Similarly, Shao et al (2020) account well for the role of emotions in SLA. Although they do not talk specifically about discomfort and solidarity, they do not exclude them by clarifying "that the aspects included in each component of the model are […just] examples" (Ibid., 6). Nonetheless again, they do not elaborate on how SLA and language decolonisation can be linked via emotions.

Consequently, from any of the above-mentioned field's perspective, language learning and the role it plays in language decolonisation lacks more nuanced theorisation. Since my research explores the ways in which experiences of teaching and learning Uzbek as L2 might affect the extent of Uzbek language decolonisation, in this subsection I will draw on the key sources discussed in this chapter to better theorise and specify the connection between these two main domains of my study. As any emotions, discomfort and solidarity can contribute to SLA, according to Shao et al's (2020) logic. They also should contribute to decolonisation, according to Zembylas (2022). Thus, I can utilise them as an overlapping area of both conceptualisations.

4.4.1 Uzbek Language Learning and Uzbek Language Decolonisation

Previously, Porto and Zembylas (2020, 2022) have shown that discomfort and solidarity can be beneficial in foreign language learning classrooms, which suggests that (language) decolonisation can lead to language acquisition. At the same time, the foreign language proficiency level of students, who participated in their studies, was B2/C1 (according to Common European Framework of References for Languages), indicating their sound fluency, and hence ability to hold discussions on difficult topics such as decolonisation. Moreover, Porto and Zembylas (2020) draw on Nussbaum (2010:59), who says: “All students should learn at least one foreign language well. Seeing how another group of intelligent human beings has cut up the world differently (...) gives a young person a lesson in cultural humility (...) the understanding of difference that a foreign language conveys is irreplaceable.” These two pieces of evidence suggest that language acquisition is likely to influence the language decolonisation.

These are helpful for specifying the link between the acquisition of Uzbek as L2 and Uzbek language decolonisation in my research. Hence, if Uzbek language acquisition generates discomfort and solidarity, it will likely contribute to Uzbek language decolonisation. And if Uzbek language decolonisation is accepted at the emotional micro-level through discomfort and solidarity, it will likely contribute to Uzbek language acquisition by those who have been disregarding it so far. The other aspects of learning Uzbek as L2 such as outcomes, individual characteristics and environments/institutions are equally important to consider as the generic factors that affect discomfort and solidarity, and hence, facilitate or obstruct the decolonisation of the Uzbek language (see Figure 4.2). More specific factors are to be identified in this study.

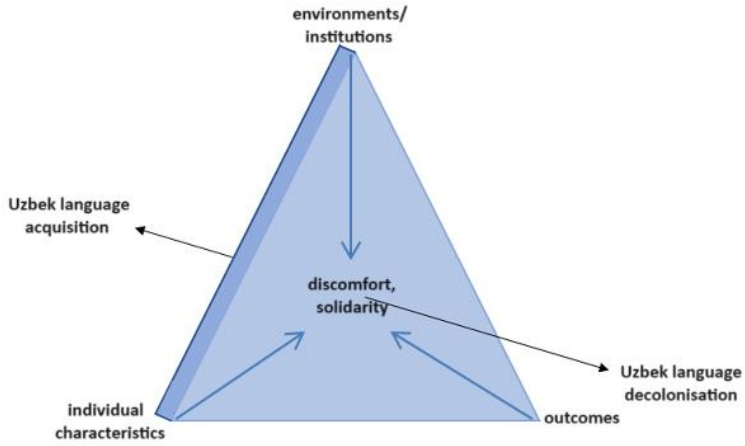

Figure 4.2. Visualising the connection between Uzbek language decolonisation and Uzbek language acquisition

4.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the conceptual framework of my research, which consists of key components of Shao et al's (2020) L2 language emotions and positive psychology model supplemented with Zembylas's (2022) theory of affective decolonisation based on pedagogies of discomfort. Shao et al's (2020) model offers different ways to explain how emotional encounters of language learners, interplaying with different individual and contextual issues can result in a certain level of L2 proficiency and vice versa, and hence, can be utilised to explore in depth the contribution of various factors affecting teaching and learning of Uzbek as L2. Additionally, I have shown that the construct of negative emotions, namely white discomfort, is an overlapping element of both conceptual frameworks, which can help connect Uzbek language learning with Uzbek language decolonisation. On one hand, discomfort can inspire a person to explore issues beyond his/her comfort zone and start questioning established misconceptions, myths, values, habits and practices. On the other hand, it can build anxiety and restrain one's capacity to take actions, which can be prevented by enabling solidarity. The notion of decolonising solidarity is useful as well as problematic in this regard as it bears an assumption that Indigenous people are all in solidarity with each other regarding the issues of decolonisation. It might be an issue of why people feel discomfort with colonial struggles but cannot develop

decolonising solidarity with others. Another claim I have made in this chapter is that language fluency is as important for its decolonisation as raising the issues of decolonisation in L2 classrooms. Finally, I have demonstrated how Shao et al's (2020) model adds on to Zembylas's conceptualisation and vice versa by introducing the idea of agency and extending environments/institutions to family, peers, colleagues and wider environment, hence not putting entire responsibility on individuals.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

● How do learners of Uzbek as a second language perceive and interpret their emotional experiences within the context of Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan?

● What are the critical factors that shape these emotional experiences, and in what ways do they facilitate or obstruct the decolonisation of the Uzbek language?

For this, I will use a qualitative research design. In order to collect the data, semi-structured interviews were carried out, which were afterwards analysed using a narrative inquiry approach. The main participants of my research were Uzbek people who studied Uzbek language as L2 in Uzbek schools and universities. However, teachers of Uzbek as L2 were also interviewed to ensure reliability of the data. In this section I outline my ontological and epistemological positions, why they are as such, and how they affected my methodological choice. Then, I set out how and why I selected my research sample, and introduce my research participants. Next, I explain how I carried out the interviews and the reasons for opting this data collection technique. After that, I specify the data analysis procedures as well as a rationale for their choice. Lastly, I explore pertinent methodological drawbacks and ethical issues related to my research.

5.2 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

My choice of the research topic and methodology is grounded in the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, according to which reality is a social construct and a subject to interpretations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). “The constructivist-interpretivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology which assumes there are multiple realities, a subjectivist epistemology where the knower and respondent co-create understandings in the natural world through a set of methodological procedures” (Otoo, 2020:78). Despite the fact that such

methods are unable to measure phenomena, they allow for identifying the information, which can be brushed aside by someone with a positivist lens who might overgeneralise the results of research (Pham, 2018).

I stand with Peim (2018) who suggests that the acquisition of knowledge cannot be disentangled from our own understanding of phenomena; there are multiple interpretations and perspectives on the same phenomena, suggesting that concepts are dispositional. This follows the hermeneutic approach (Ramsook, 2018) which suggests that there are multiple realities, and different people act differently even in the same situations. In this sense the research under the interpretivist paradigm where the participants are viewed as subjects of study, and with a researcher comprising a community of partners who co-create knowledge is very compatible with the social justice research (Johnson and Parry, 2022).

Putnam and Banghart's (2017) guidelines to conduct research within the interpretivist approach have been helpful to avoid certain methodological misconceptions. They made me less concerned about the generalisability and reliability of my research findings but more cognisant of comprehensiveness and coherency, which cannot be met without full engagement with my participants' stories in order to understand their experiences. While recognising that certain historical, political and economic circumstances can influence the social actors, I have a strong opinion that the learners of Uzbek as L2 are not the passive victims of the colonial past or postcolonial presence. The attitude of the Uzbek language learners to their ancestral tongue as well as their level of proficiency in it should be rather seen as a result of their interaction with the Uzbek language teachers and even with a wider environment. The established relationships along with the accompanying emotions were seen as no less significant than the external economic and political factors.

5.3 Methodology

Interpretivism is in tune with a huge variety of methods and, for this study, I chose a narrative inquiry design that I thought could be the most beneficial to answer

my research questions. The advantages of narrative inquiry research include providing an insightful story of one's life experience, giving voice to those, whose experiences were often overlooked (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005; Padgett, 2011). Thus, it has been thought that using this type of research will allow for a good account of how emotional aspects of learning Uzbek as L2 might affect its decolonisation.

The narrative inquiry method was demonstrated to suit the small-scale investigators particularly well (Lyons and Skull, 2023). I thought that narrative inquiries would result in a profound understanding of the phenomena of the Uzbek language decolonisation, along with revealing some practical issues that need to be addressed in schools and universities. In particular, narrative inquiries have been shown to be beneficial for generating ideas, which could improve practice (Sisk-Hilton and Meier, 2016). The narrative inquiry method additionally makes it possible to supplement a theory with new views (Wang and Geale, 2015). Considering the history of teaching and learning Uzbek as L2, there seems to be injustices created by the state education system towards those who study Uzbek not as their L1. How much this is evident from the learning experiences can be helpful to understand the current situation with decolonising the Uzbek language in Uzbekistan and whether the decolonisation agenda should be prioritised over social justice. Thus, in my narrative inquiry I will bear in mind Zembylas's (2022) theoretical framework and look for other valuable insights into the actual learning encounters. Even though it does not employ a variety of the evidence sources as a case study does (Sonday, Ramugondo and Kathard, 2020), the narrative inquiry method can illuminate obscure aspects of decolonisation (Hamdan, 2009).

5.4 Sampling

I planned to identify 20-25 people to collect data by conducting and recording individual interviews that would aim to elicit what emotions the people experienced when learning Uzbek as a postcolonial state language. I applied this data collection technique face-to-face and via Zoom/Google Meet, when necessary. All research participants were thought to be people of non-Uzbek

ethnic origin, who are 35-40 years old and studied Uzbek as a second language in Uzbekistan at the Russian-medium school and university almost at the same time as I did. Since they have also seen the independence of Uzbekistan, the transition process, they were thought to provide interesting insights into how their relationships with Uzbek language have been affected by schooling at those uneasy times.

However, I was struck with the fact that there was no logic to try getting insights about Uzbek language-related colonial struggles from people of non-Uzbek ethnic origin. This fact made me think of Zembylas's framework as something addressing only the former colonisers. His notion of "standing with" is addressed only to the former colonisers. In other words, is it assumed that the Indigenous people are all united in terms of decolonising solidarity? To check this assumption, I changed my initial plan and decided to include more interviews with ethnic Uzbeks about their struggles and successes to learn Uzbek as L2 at school or university.

I have applied a snowball sampling method (Parker, Scott and Geddes, 2019) to recruit participants for my research project. I had 2-3 people in mind to start with. Every next participant was one recommended by the previous. Thus, not interviewing my close contacts but using them entirely as contact providers, I could select 25 participants that were unfamiliar to me.

However, it has to be noted that almost halfway through my interviews I got stuck because of no candidates of age 35-40 that would be willing to participate in my research. While doing the interviews I noticed the following:

1) All of my interviewees who have children have mentioned that their children keep experiencing the same problems in terms of learning Uzbek language at school now as their parents did when they studied in the 1990s;

2) One of my interviewees, a senior lecturer of History at one of the Uzbek universities, has mentioned that his students (age 18-24) often complained about how Uzbek was taught at schools, listing the same issues.

Bearing this in mind, I wondered how important it was for my interviewees to meet the age requirements of 35-40 as was set initially. Additionally, while I was having a hard time recruiting participants of age 35-40, there seemed to be a bigger interest to answer my questions among the younger people (age 20-25). I was told about this by some of my participants at the earlier stage. I have even heard that one of the much older acquaintances of my interviewee expressed great interest in answering my questions, but I hoped that I would be able to recruit enough candidates meeting the initial criteria.

After some consideration I have decided to change my sampling by including participants aged 20 to 40 as long as they met other criteria: having studied in a Russian-medium school/university, having studied Uzbek as L2. Despite such a significant limitation as overlooking the perspectives of other age groups (Hoosain, 2018) caused by this decision, it is still can be justified by the possibility to deal with vividly recalled experiences but reflected upon with sufficient maturity, which may not necessarily be the case of people who are much older than 40 (Rhodes, Greene and Naveh-Benjamin, 2019) and much younger than 20, respectively. The chosen age range (20-40) has considerably speeded up the data collection process and also allowed for intergenerational comparisons (Hoosain, 2018), which made my understanding of the phenomenon more nuanced, and thus, more accurate. Although it might be interesting to compare the Soviet and post-Soviet experiences of learning Uzbek at schools and universities, I have not included 40+ aged participants because till 1989 Uzbek did not have the status of the state language in Uzbekistan as well as their period of study fell on colonial, not postcolonial times. An additional argument for not recruiting much older participants is the practical challenges such as possible health problems, restricted mobility (Schlenk et al., 2009), greater time and financial investments to facilitate their participation (Mody et al., 2008; Rigatti, DeGurian and Albert, 2022). The shareable profile of Uzbek language learners who participated in my research is given in Table 5.1.

Name[14]	Age[15]	Overall Uzbek proficiency[16]	Ethnic origin	Interview mode
Aynisa	35	basic-intermediate	Tatar	face-to-face
Azamat	40	basic	Mixed[17]	face-to-face
Bahodir	37	proficient	Uzbek	face-to-face
Bobomurod	40	intermediate	Uzbek	face-to-face
Dinislom	24	advanced	Mixed	online
Elshod	35	proficient	Mixed	face-to-face
Hojimat	20	advanced	Uzbek	online
Karima	21	intermediate	Mixed	online
Latofat	20	intermediate	Mixed	online
Lola	38	intermediate	Mixed	face-to-face
Lora	40	advanced	Korean	face-to-face
Nina	40	basic	Russian	face-to-face
O‘lmasoy	40	advanced	Uzbek	face-to-face
Parvina	23	basic-intermediate	Mixed	online
Ruxshona	20	basic-intermediate	Mixed	face-to-face
Salima	24	basic-intermediate	Mixed	online

[14] Names were changed to ensure anonymity.

[15] At the time of interview.

[16] Self-ranked.

[17] Born in an interethnic marriage, where only one of the parents is an ethnic Uzbek.

Sarvar	31	basic-intermediate	Mixed	online
Setora	40	advance	Uzbek	face-to-face
Sevda	27	upper-intermediate	Mixed	online
Shoira	34	advanced	Mixed	online
Taisiya	40	basic	Mixed	face-to-face
Umayra	40	basic-intermediate	Mixed	face-to-face
Vali	37	basic-intermediate	Mixed	face-to-face
Vikentiy	40	proficient	Russian	face-to-face
Vladislav	40	intermediate	Russian	face-to-face

Table 5.1 Shareable profile of Uzbek language learner participants

Additionally, after having conducted interviews with the Uzbek language learners and having identified their concerns regarding how the language was taught, I decided to interview 10 teachers of Uzbek as a L2 at Russian-medium schools, universities and private courses. For that I have also applied a snowball sampling method, starting with my school teacher of Uzbek. This part of the data collection, namely, interviewing teachers was not planned initially. However, it has allowed for triangulating the findings obtained from the Uzbek language learners as well as for hearing teachers' perspectives on the concerns raised. The shareable profile of Uzbek language teachers who participated in my research is given in Table 5.2.

Teacher[18]	**Place of work**	**Diploma qualifications**	**Interview mode**
Dildora	school, university	Uzbek philology	face-to-face

[18] Names were changed to ensure anonymity.

Gulxumor	university, online	Uzbek philology	online
Gulshan	school	Music	face-to-face
Karomat	school	English philology	face-to-face
Lutfiya	school	French philology	face-to-face
Marjona	school	Uzbek philology	online
Narimon	university	Uzbek philology	face-to-face
O‘g‘iloy	school	Uzbek philology	face-to-face
Saodat	online	Economics	face-to-face
Zarina	school	Uzbek philology	online

Table 5.2 Shareable profile of Uzbek language teacher participants

5.5 Data Collection Methods and Rationale

5.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are defined as those that “can make better use of knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee; as well, the interviewer has a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the process itself, rather that hiding behind a pre-set interview guide” (Brinkmann, 2014:437). These interviews were an important component of the narrative investigations that enabled generating abundant information on how the participants interpreted and understood their teaching and learning circumstances, as well as the actions they took to make the situation advantageous for learners or gain benefits from it as learners. The interviews shed some light into the participants' attitudes, emotions, and values in a manner seldom achieved through alternative techniques like surveys (Harrell and Bradley, 2009). The interviews allowed for clarifying and expanding the ideas gained from the literature and the participants. The selection of semi-structured interviews was beneficial due to the possibility of carrying out the guiding

conversations within the pre-set framework regarding the emotional aspect of Uzbek language decolonisation and the potential impacts it may have had on its teaching and learning. This still allowed for exploring the ideas, emotions, and encounters regarding how the language was acquired, taught, and perceived. In turn, an unstructured interview would not make comparing and contrasting the participants' responses as easy.

Some of the challenges related to interviews could comprise interviewees being avoidant or withholding information. Additionally, there could be difficulties in establishing meaning and attempting to embellish or over-criticise the real state of things, especially given that neither learning nor teaching experiences were observed. Although the reliance on participants' memories is a valid approach, it is not entirely unproblematic, because "[m]emories are not stored as exact copies of experiences, but are reconstructed and reshaped over time, influenced by subsequent events and social context" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:152). At the same time, it can be argued that an interviewer is not a miner who digs to obtain objectives facts, but rather a traveller who takes a journey into people's perceptions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Given that my study is about emotions/feelings, it is also worth recalling Maya Angelou (in Taylor, 2018), who stated: "I've learnt that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Therefore, relying on people's memories when they try to recall their emotional experiences does not seem to be absolutely inaccurate. Moreover, for me, trusting my participants was essential, so interviews remained an effective means for depicting the national language decolonisation situation in post-Soviet Uzbekistan through micro-level experiences.

All of the interviews with the Uzbek language learners were conducted in Russian. Although carrying out the conversations in the former imperial language might contradict the decolonisation theme of my research, I thought it would be important to choose a language that would be mutually convenient both for understanding and expressing deep thinking. Nonetheless, Russian has been acknowledged by all of my Uzbek language learner participants as their strongest language or the language of their deep thinking. Such depth, so important for the

research purposes as well, could not have been achieved if my participants were interviewed in a less convenient language. Additionally, no one was against the interviews being in Russian. In contrast, the interviews with most of the Uzbek language teachers were conducted in Uzbek. The main argument for that again was the convenience of the language for my research participants.

5.5.2 Interview procedure

The interviewing process lasted from December 2022 till September 2023. Each interview took approximately an hour, although there were some shorter and some longer ones. Those, who were particularly interested in the discussion and my research topic in general, reassured me that running over the specified time was not a big problem. Both the pilot and main interviews happened in a similar manner. Instead of taking notes, I used a digital tool to record the interviews. This allowed me to focus more on the participants and what they were saying. Since I was not afraid of missing any important remark or example, I could simply enjoy listening to different stories, ensuring mutual understanding and making our conversation more organic.

Treating my interviewees with respect, care and trust was thought to be essential for obtaining well-grounded answers as well. During the interview process at times, I talked about my own experiences, feelings and some funny situations that would allow my participants to understand that any detail and/or example they gave was valuable for me and that there was no need to use dense academic language when sharing their learning and teaching experiences. I hoped it would facilitate the recall of similar or completely different situations that would enrich my understanding of the emotional aspects of Uzbek language decolonisation. With one participant, namely my Uzbek language teacher, it was probably easier because we have known each other for so many years, maintaining a very warm, sincere and trusting relationship. She has always supported me with my artistic and linguistic endeavours in the field of Uzbek language and was happy to help me with my research connected to the Uzbek language.

It is also important to add on the specifics of online interviews. Online interviews can be defined as those that "may involve audio, textual exchanges via emails, discussion forums or bulletin boards or video conferencing" (Cin et al., 2021:254). I have used Zoom conferencing for my interviews, which allowed me to access distant participants (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014). Additionally, it is known that participants might feel more comfortable and safer in an online environment and thus, to open up more during the interview (Weller, 2017). They can also withdraw from the interview by simply ending the conference (Janghorban et al., 2014). However, comparing my experiences of interviewing face-to-face and online, I cannot say that one was more effective than another. As for the withdrawal during the interview process, none of my participants did so. Perhaps, I could avoid these because the online interview procedure was very similar to the above-described.

5.6 Data Analysis Methods and Rationale

Although there are various techniques to analyse qualitative data, narrative analysis most suited my research. "Narrative analysis is an umbrella term for a family of methods that share a focus on stories" (Smith, 2016:207) that are made available by society and culture for us to interpret. It shares the philosophical assumptions of relativism and constructionism (Ibid.), which is in line with my ontological and epistemological stance. I found it most applicable for my study due to the following reasons:

First, narrative analysis, unlike other methods, does not overuse coding, so leaves a researcher with more freedom to interpret the data through the data–driven approach. The latter is particularly important because my goal was not to simply state and describe my findings. Additionally, unlike interpretative phenomenological analysis, narrative analysis focuses predominantly on human experiences as something socially constructed (Ibid.), which is very valuable given the nature of my research.

Second, in contrast to chronicles, annals and other reports, stories reflect cultural and relational aspects of human past in a reflexive manner, which gives a

researcher an idea about their subjectivity (Caddick, 2016). Moreover, narrative analysis recognises that our experiences and feelings shape and are shaped by our narratives (Burkitt, 2014). This makes the latter valuable and meaningful resources to explore.

5.6.1 Procedure

Narrative analysis procedures share many commonalities with other qualitative analysis methods, although there are some variations in approaches. Since I was concerned more with what my interviewees said rather than how their stories were built or who they were told for, the choice of thematic narrative analysis seemed the most appropriate (Mihas, 2023). My analytical procedure was closest to that described by Smith (2016), mainly because it is non-linear, does not use the prescribed coding, and hence, does not "prevent thought from moving" (Frank, 2010:73). Using the above-mentioned procedure as a guide, I undertook the following steps:

5.6.2 Transcription, translation and indwelling

The recordings of interviews conducted in Uzbek were transcribed word by word manually by me due to the lack of a tool that would transcribe in Uzbek. The recordings of interviews conducted in Russian were transcribed using Office 365 software. The produced transcripts were checked for accuracy before translating into English, which I did myself. During the transcription and translation phases I had an opportunity for "indwelling" (Smith, 2016:216) or immersing myself in the data, not just to become more familiar with them but also "to live within… understanding the person's point of view from an empathetic rather than sympathetic position" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:25).

5.6.3 Identifying stories, themes, thematic relationships and structure

After having become familiar with transcripts, I started looking for the stories in the text. Paying attention to word signals indicating beginning, culmination and end, I was able to establish the sequence of lines that would flow from one another. Then, I started identifying themes (see Appendix A) and thematic

relationships by looking at the common patterns in stories, highlighting key phrases and words. I followed Smith's (2016) advice and tried not to over-code in order to save the story. He prefers calling this process 'theme-ing' rather than 'coding' (Ibid., 217).

Using the NVivo software package for qualitative analysis was considered initially but it was not applied given the manageability of the data obtained from a relatively small sample. Other reasons for not using it were NVivo's seeming ability to take over and start managing the researcher, generating too many codes as well as the possibility of ending up going back to the whole transcripts (Zamawe, 2015). Thus, coding/theme-ing was conducted manually.

As for identifying the structure of the stories, I looked carefully at how the stories develop over time, how my participants reflect on their endeavours, whether they were successful or not, what emotions they felt and why. By putting all these together, I started seeing more holistic representation of their experiences shared.

5.6.4 Pulling the analysis together and presenting the data

In order to answer my first research question, I clustered the generated themes in the following order: 1) ethnic background; 2) familial experiences with Uzbek; 3) school and university experiences with Uzbek; 4) wider environmental/private/informal experiences with Uzbek, I was able to build a typology (Smith, 2016) - typical cases united by certain common characteristics and experiences. They have been presented as blocks of text viewed through the prism of my theoretical framework and the literature reviewed. Instead of writing 25 different narratives it was decided to merge them into the four core ones based on such features of my participants as being or not an ethnic Uzbek, and failing or succeeding to learn Uzbek. These all are presented in Chapter 6. I also supplemented some of them with the data from teacher interviews.

In order to answer my second research question, I split the collected data on Russian influence/postcolonial feelings into five separate thematic narratives: Imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and cultural capitals;

Ambiguous perspectives of Uzbek language proficiency; (De)colonial tensions driven by ethnicity and self-perception; Understanding of Uzbek history; Connection with the outside world. These narratives, to which my own story was added, were also viewed through the prism of my theoretical framework and the literature reviewed. These all are presented in Chapter 7. The different experiences of the participants under the same core narrative have been clearly demonstrated. Additionally, some quotations have been used to illustrate my interpretation of the interviewees' words.

Finally, the translation of interviews from Uzbek and Russian into English could also be threatening the trustworthiness of my analysis. To minimise this threat, I applied back-translation (Behr, 2017). This technique was used for the translation of the interview questions, consent and participant information forms.

5.7 Limitations and Trustworthiness

Indeed, my results cannot be generalised in the same way as quantitative findings (Carminati, 2018). However, it is still possible to talk about validity/trustworthiness of qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). This can be improved by taking different measures at different stages of research (Hayashi, 2011).

It has been suggested that one of the ways to ensure validity of the qualitative research before collecting the data is being previously immersed in the field (Hayashi, Abib and Hoppen, 2019). In this regard I can say I have been exposed to the Uzbek context of my study for years. Additionally, I have also intensively researched the related issues in the same context for two years during the Part 1 of my PhD studies.

At the post-analytical stage, the research validity is said to be increased by "researcher's exposure at a scientific event" and review (Hayashi, Abib and Hoppen, 2019:105). The informal monthly chats about my research progress, the department seminar, the online conference I participated in as well as the review of my work by my supervisor resulted in valuable comments, critiques and advice. They helped me refine my research findings and their presentation.

At the stages of data collection and analysis, data triangulation is mentioned as an important action to maximise validity (Hayashi, Abib and Hoppen, 2019). Triangulation can be defined as “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell and Miller, 2000:126). In this regard, I triangulated the data obtained from interviewing Uzbek language learners with the information generated from discussions with Uzbek language teachers. I also used previous research findings to compare and contrast with mine. Additionally, validity is said to be improved by “rich and detailed field description” (Hayashi, Abib and Hoppen, 2019:105), which I provided, keeping in mind the ethical considerations, which I am going to outline next.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

There have been some ethical concerns before commencing and throughout my research. I have familiarised my participants with the objectives of my project and the type of contribution I sought from them. I have familiarised them with the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) and the Consent form (Appendix C). These along with interview questions, if/when necessary, have been given in any of the three languages: English, Russian, and Uzbek. Furthermore, I adhered to the relational ethics of narrative inquiry, which include: “the necessity of moving slowly […], to be still and to attend carefully to, and with, silence and with contemplation” (Clandinin, Caine and Lessard, 2018:14).

To minimise this risk of distress from recalling the Uzbek teaching and learning experiences, I explicitly informed my participants about the nature of the study (identifying emotions), provided the interview questions in advance and asked if answering them would cause any distress. I encouraged participants to ask any questions they had about potential worries or anxieties. It was decided that any participant who admitted to being distressed would not participate in the research. Furthermore, I continuously monitored the participants' emotional reactions during the interview to determine if breaks were needed. I considered stopping the interview if someone became upset, but fortunately, this did not occur.

To ensure anonymity, I omitted any personal details of my participants that could identify them. Additionally, I gave each participant a different name. Although pseudonymising them myself without letting each of my research participant pick a pseudonym is not in line with the most recent ethical trends in qualitative research (Lahman, Thomas and Teman, 2023), this tactic has been chosen for the following reasons: 1) most of my research participants wanted their real names to be used, which would not allow me to maintain confidentiality (Grinyer, 2004); 2) agreeing on a certain pseudonym is known to be not straightforward (Heaton, 2022) and at times there is a risk that a participant's choice might be misinterpreted (Brear, 2018) or reveal other, rather delicate aspects of their identity (Downe, 2001); 3) because the researcher ultimately selects how the empirical data should be used, Vainio (2012) argues that enabling interviewees to choose their pseudonyms may harm the sensitive power dynamics between the researcher and his/her informants; 4) additionally, Edwards (2020) argues, the researchers attempt to evoke a feeling of familiarity for the readers by opting for a pseudonym for those specific participants.

To ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of the online discussions were not compromised on my end, I adjusted the appropriate settings to allow only the project participants to enter the online conference room. The videos have been recorded and stored on the University system. After transcribing and anonymising the data from the video recordings, the videos have been deleted.

The final ethical issue is related to my positionality. I considered myself more as an insider in relation to "(1) the subject under investigation, (2) the research participants, and (3) the research context and process" (Holmes, 2020:2). However, I realised that the fact that I introduced myself to my research participants as a PhD student from Lancaster University might be viewed as outsiderness, and therefore, distance participants from me (Chhabra, 2020). I felt it was important to share my Uzbek learning experience and show how it is common to theirs, that I am not a stranger and know the context well. At the same time, I did not want my participants to feel less knowledgeable or less open-minded, so I always told them how valuable their expertise and perspectives were for me. Additionally, being a western university student might have played a

negative role in recruiting interviewees, who might have been sceptical about the ability of my study to affect the solution of the long-lasting problems of Uzbek language and its education, especially given that my work would be published in English. I hope to address this concern by publishing at least a part of my work in Uzbek and/or Russian later, so more people can access the results of my research.

Chapter 6: Emotional Experiences of Learning Uzbek as L2

6.1 Introduction

The main goals of this research were to identify emotional experiences Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan has offered to the learners of Uzbek as L2 as well as the factors which have a bearing on these experiences, fostering or inhibiting the Uzbek language decolonisation. As an exploration, it addresses the scarcity of research regarding the influence of language education on language decolonisation in the Uzbek context and deepens our understanding of how Uzbek language education can enable or limit the formation of a decolonial mind-set in relation to Uzbek language. As a contribution to policy, given that decolonisation is a continuous political trend in many countries in the world, which cannot be fully achieved without addressing coloniality in language, this study is especially opportune and may assist illuminating transformative steps in L2 language education and enhancing its quality. Lastly, with respect to theory, utilising Shao et al's (2020) model of SLA allows for better examination of various factors that cause certain emotional experiences and injustices in the field of teaching and learning Uzbek as L2, while applying Zembylas's (2022) conceptualisation of affective decolonisation to Uzbek language decolonisation results in novel understandings of the nature of this process.

The following narratives: 1. Discouraged but not guilty; 2. Proud but not sufficiently challenged; 3. Feeling Shame; 4. Grateful - identify the main emotional experiences of learning Uzbek as L2, are the answers to my first research question. They will be presented in the same order in this chapter. Thus, here, I will focus on the emotional experiences offered by formal and informal Uzbek language learning settings and accompanying injustices.

This part of my findings draws special attention to how many of my research participants could not succeed in learning Uzbek at schools, colleges, lyceums and universities in Uzbekistan. By naming the obstacles which have prevented the development of my interviewees' Uzbek language proficiency skills, this section hopefully can help policy make Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan

more equitable. The emotions experienced by the majority of my research participants have been mainly influenced by the environmental factors such as family, school, university and peers, and to a lesser extent by their ethnic origin (personal characteristic) and success or failure to learn Uzbek (outcome). This is generally in agreement with Shao et al's (2020) model of SLA (see Figure 4.1). As it is evident from the following subsections, the combination of the above-mentioned factors can adversely affect the development of Uzbek language proficiency in a variety of ways, but some of my interviewees were sufficiently agentic and motivated to overcome this negative influence.

6.2 Discouraged but Not Guilty

This narrative covers the experiences of learning Uzbek as L2 by Nina, Taisiya, Vladislav and Aynisa, who have non-Uzbek ethnic origin. They were brought up in the 1980-1990s in the widely Russian-speaking environment of Tashkent city and its suburbs (Peremkulov, 2021), and managed to get away without mastering Uzbek language skills. However, despite their generally positive attitude to Uzbek language, it continues playing a secondary role in their lives, although none of them is planning to leave Uzbekistan. This narrative is called "Discouraged but Not Guilty" because most of the experiences discussed in this subsection did not encourage Nina, Taisiya, Vladislav and Aynisa to learn Uzbek, so they cannot be fully responsible for not having learnt it. I will present and discuss their experiences informed by interactions with the following settings: 1) family; 2) wider environment; 3) formal schooling; and 4) informal/private learning - in the same order.

The parents of Nina and Vladislav do not speak Uzbek, so could not pass that skill to their children. Taisiya's father and Aynisa's parents speak Uzbek but they have never spoken Uzbek with their children at home. At the same time, the parents of all the four have never been in opposition to their children learning Uzbek. At that, the parents of Nina, Vladislav and Taisiya viewed their children's Uzbek language acquisition just as a part of doing well academically, which was encouraged in all studies (not only in Uzbek), although it is known that good grades do not always correlate with the motivation to learn a language (Rose et

al., 2020). In turn, being actually able to understand and speak Uzbek was something that only Aynisa was obliged by her father to do: “You live in Uzbekistan; you must know Uzbek.” Nonetheless, she developed very limited Uzbek language skills - just enough to survive in everyday situations such as “in the market and in public transportation”.

Notably, developing understanding of Uzbek language was also relatively easier only for Aynisa because she spoke Tatar, a language, which is closely related to Uzbek (Ataöv, 1992), with her grandmothers. Additionally, she seemed to learn some Uzbek also to avoid being teased by her father’s question: “Sen o‘zbekcha bilmaysanmi? (Don’t you know Uzbek?)” in the situations demanding Uzbek. Nina and Vladislav were not teased by their parents for not speaking Uzbek perhaps because their parents did not know the language themselves. However, Taisiya’s father, once helping her with the Uzbek language homework, “laughed at her accent”, which killed her willingness to try in that instant. Apparently, it is a lack of linguistic support and authentic situations demanding to use the language by family members that demotivate them to communicate in L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome, 2011).

The wider living environment of all the four did not encourage them to learn Uzbek either.

> All my friends speak Russian. Our neighbours know that we’re Russian-speaking, and therefore they mostly speak Russian with us. (Aynisa)

> All my friends and colleagues are Russian-speaking. Therefore, using the Uzbek language is a waste of time, given my level of knowledge of the language. But it’s also very accepted among native Uzbeks that they immediately switch to Russian. They call it respect, although I don't know what respectful is in that. And when they see a person mumble something, “puffs”, tries hard, they switch to Russian. Or they generally say they need to know or practise Russian, and “don’t speak Uzbek with me, leave it for home, and all this is not necessary.” And the practice doesn't work. (Vladislav)

These quotes suggest that the wider living environment does not make clear for the Uzbek language learners of non-Uzbek ethnic origin whether and how Uzbek should be used, and hence, does not perform its crucial role in SLA (Steffensen and Kramsch, 2017). As result, their Uzbek language learning experiences were largely unsuccessful, unpleasant and only episodically welcoming in this regard, which is also shown as a source of language learning demotivation by Chulee et al (2023). Their attempts to speak Uzbek would often cause native speakers' smiles, scepticism (in case of Vladislav) or snappy responses (in case of Taisiya), which would serve as demotivating factors.

> I've a colleague. Once he came at half past six in the evening or something. One told him simply "Assalomu alaykum (Greetings)", and I added that you can also say "Xayrli oqshom (Good evening)". And he said, "It's not evening yet." Well, it was getting dark. (Taisiya)

> Ethnic Russians who speak Uzbek make native Uzbek speakers smile, to put it softly… They're sceptical… and immediately switch to Russian. (Vladislav)

Besides being unsupportive, the wider environment does not seem to make them feel positive about their attempts to speak Uzbek, which is known to be important for L2 language motivation (MacIntyre and Vincze, 2017). This was aggravated by what kind of Uzbek they learnt and how it was taught at school and university. Vladislav mentioned that the standard Uzbek taught at school and university is so different from Tashkent dialect spoken on the streets (Turaeva, 2015) that it is hard to draw parallels between what is taught and what is needed for real life speaking and understanding.

> If you speak a formal language [taught in all Uzbek schools], it's useless in Tashkent. Speaking Tashkent dialect is very difficult in fact, because you need to develop your pronunciation and know very well these colloquial speech nuances that a non-native speaker, with all due respect to teachers, most likely won't learn without being immersed into the environment.

This quote also points that the principle of authenticity is not followed in the teaching approach, and this is known to demotivate L2 learners (MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome, 2011).

The formal Uzbek language education encounters of all the four contributed significantly to the extent they could master Uzbek language to, and to their Uzbek language related metacognition. All the four said that they had rather negative than positive experiences of learning Uzbek in formal educational settings. These involve demotivated/demotivating Uzbek language teachers, their boring teaching methods, attitude to their jobs (tardiness and absenteeism), irrelevant tasks/homework (e.g., “come up with 20 words starting with letter j” - Taisiya), the existing curriculum emphasising doing grammatical exercises rather than speaking, and irrelevant assessment approaches (e.g., “who answers the question first [regardless of the quality of the response] will get an A for courage” - Taisiya). These demotivating factors are largely similar to those identified by Ushioda (1994), Dörnyei (2001), Muhonen (2004), Meshkat and Hassani (2012) and Vakilifard et al., (2020) in the context of studying other languages.

Additionally, according to Taisiya and Vladislav, the absence of assessment techniques like CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)[19] prevents from determining a learner's Uzbek proficiency level (Gafforov and Kosimov, 2022) and building upon that. In connection to this, Nina pointed out that there is no rewarding system for a certain level of Uzbek language proficiency that would encourage people to learn Uzbek (Wei and Kolko, 2005). Nevertheless, all the four gave a few credits to their schools for teaching them the basics of Uzbek such as grammar, although admitted that the way of teaching it was rather passive and uninteresting. In contrast, learning Uzbek in university was recalled mostly negatively. E.g.,

[19] For more information, please see North (2014).

> At the university, my Uzbek language went down to zero, because we weren't taught it at all. Our teacher was constantly late or didn't show up at all. (Aynisa)

> At the university, they forced me to memorise some very complex literary expressions unneeded for everyday life. I should probably know them, but this is another level. When a foreign language is taught, everything should come step by step. It seems to me that this movement from simple to complex, which is generally logical, is absent in Uzbek language teaching. (Nina)

> At the university I learnt some basic grammar, but it doesn't help me much in everyday life. (Taisiya)

Indeed, teacher's behaviour (Gorham and Christophel, 1992), focus on grammar and memorisation (Çankaya, 2018) are known as strong demotivating factors in SLA.

Interestingly, each of the four experienced the switch from the Cyrillic-based to Latin-based Uzbek alphabet differently. Aynisa struggled with it a lot as she "had a hard time recognising the specific Uzbek phonemes and relating them to the corresponding graphemes" due to having been introduced to the Latin-based alphabet only in upper grades and not having sufficient practice with it, which is in agreement with Asselborn et al (2021). In contrast, Vladislav managed a smooth transition and was "quite critical about the people who found it difficult". Nina and Taisiya did not necessarily find this switch practically challenging for themselves. Nina talked more about how disadvantaged the new generation of native Uzbek speakers became, because "they were educated only through the Latin-based script and now cannot access the literature in their language, which is available mostly in the Uzbek Cyrillic script" (in line with Schweitzer, 2020). She also mentioned how difficult it is for the university professors as representatives of the older generation, who "know only the Cyrillic alphabet but have to read students' assignments written in the Latin-based script" (in line with Ibid.). In turn, Taisiya talked more about the incompleteness of the alphabet

reform and the related decline in literacy (Narmatova and Abdurakhmanova, 2022) evident from the document flow she deals with in her company. Additionally, she mentioned that introducing the Latin-based alphabet in lower primary Russian-medium school grades “confuses young learners who have to learn two alphabets”, which is in line with Lukatela and Turvey (1998) and Matta Abizeid et al. (2017).

Despite the above-mentioned difficulties, there were some bright spots in the formal Uzbek language learning experiences of Nina, Vladislav, Taisiya and Aynisa. Aynisa appreciated that she had only one Uzbek language teacher throughout her school career, “who was strict and demanding.” Taisiya warmly recalled her primary school Uzbek language textbooks that “adequately supported [her] learning.” Vladislav treasured good memories about his high school Uzbek language teacher who “after the years of misery made [him] understand Uzbek more and feel successful.” In turn, Nina was thankful to her first Uzbek language teacher, who sparked her interest in Uzbek language, caused her “to embrace Uzbek culture, made [her] feel good about her efforts and celebrated her accomplishments.” Unfortunately, these experiences were either insufficient or short lasting for the sustainable development of Uzbek language skills by all the four. In other words, there was no “crossing the Rubicon,” a point of no return where one commits to act in the L2” (MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome, 2011:84).

Interestingly, informal and or private Uzbek language learning experiences were more productive for Nina, Vladislav, Taisiya and Aynisa. Three years ago, Nina completed her Masters’ programme in Macromolecular Chemistry, where all courses were taught in Uzbek. What helped her understand all the lectures was “[her] good knowledge of Chemistry, some Uzbek vocabulary known from school and some international words that along with [her] intuition” would assist her to make sense out of the lectures. In spite of how much Uzbek language related stress Nina experienced, being also pregnant during the last year of her Master’s, she successfully completed her studies. Unfortunately, after having maternity leave for three years, when she was at home and did not need as much Uzbek as when doing her Master’s, Nina “forgot almost everything that [she] could

understand in Uzbek". This is in line with Ducharme (1995), who suggests that L2 retention is unlikely to occur with no practice.

A no less curious story happened to Aynisa, who "was told to teach English to Uzbek-speaking groups due to the lack of such specialists" at the school where she worked. Given that she had to teach English through Uzbek, it was a challenging experience. Luckily, Aynisa had a textbook for Uzbek-speaking learners which helped her structure her lessons and not to fail. Perhaps, what also helped her is that during those years she "watched TV programmes and movies only in Uzbek, as Russian TV channels were not available", so she learnt a lot of Uzbek words by watching TV, featuring authentic communication (MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome, 2011). Moreover, this was the time when she participated in her school's cultural events held in Uzbek. However, similarly to Nina's, Aynisa's "Uzbek degraded much after [she] moved to work at the international school", where Uzbek is rarely used (in agreement with Ducharme, 1995).

Taisiya also shared an interesting episode about informal Uzbek language learning. Her geodesy field trip with her university peers from Uzbek-speaking groups was challenging because she was immersed in an Uzbek-speaking environment for three weeks, which she had never done before. Although she admitted that this experience did not make her speak Uzbek as her parents naively thought, she "started understanding Uzbek colloquial speech better". This is in line with the research results by Savage and Hughes (2014), suggesting that a short-term L2 immersion is more beneficial for developing listening but not speaking skills. Although Taisiya "felt awkward about not being able to fully communicate with [her] peers in Uzbek", she did not lose her desire to learn the language.

One of her recent endeavours was taking a private online Uzbek language course during the COVID-19 pandemic, which she had mixed feelings about. Taisiya was very disappointed about the misalignment between what she was taught and what learning tasks she had to do independently. After some time, she found another private learning opportunity, where the teacher, materials and approach

better suited her needs. Taisiya is no longer a beginner; she continues developing her Uzbek skills and building confidence with her supportive teacher, whose role in SLA is positively perceived (Awad, 2014).

Similarly to Taisiya, Vladislav "took several independent attempts to learn Uzbek" but with greater success. One of his private tutors was particularly helpful teaching him everything starting from the Uzbek alphabet up to the complex sentence structures. With that tutor Vladislav realised that Uzbek is actually not a difficult language. However, he soon understood that "the type of language learnt was not the one used in real life". Additionally, being out of practice for years caused him to forget almost everything he learnt (in line with Ducharme, 1995). Taking the same Uzbek language course as Taisiya did, made him recall a lot of things, believe in his abilities and feel successful. Now he continues learning Uzbek at an intermediate level.

Another motivating factor for Vladislav is the fact that "Uzbek is spoken more and more now, whereas Russian is used less and less", so he needs Uzbek for everyday life, as he is planning to stay in Uzbekistan. Generally sharing Vladislav's concerns, Taisiya is motivated also by her strong desire to become familiar with rich Uzbek culture, namely, "to understand Uzbek songs and books in the original language". Thus, they have interest in language and value it, which triggers the persistence of their efforts (Flyer, 2019; Loh, 2019). In contrast, Nina does not view Uzbek language "as means of personal upgrade, as something opening horizons that [she] aspire[s] to". Although not having said the same, Aynisa is likely to share Nina's vision on the personal gains that Uzbek language can bring, given that she moved from local to international school and has recently completed her Master's in one of the UK universities. Thus, both Nina and Aynisa seem to have no motivation to improve their Uzbek.

Summarising the stories of Nina, Vladislav, Taisiya and Aynisa, I can say that none of them could benefit from the formal Uzbek language education system, whose influence was rather demotivating than encouraging. Their non-Uzbek ethnic identities, familial and wider linguistic environments were not helpful either in terms of fostering the development of Uzbek language skills. In contrast their

informal/private learning experiences were more successful. It is a pity that none of them became fluent in Uzbek, but this is not entirely their fault. Perhaps, in more supportive circumstances they would be more guilt-prone, which according to Teimouri (2019: iv) would increase “L2 learners’ motivation by encouraging corrective actions to undo their misbehaviors.”

Only Vladislav and Taisiya continued putting effort into Uzbek language learning in spite of their long stories of failure. In contrast, Nina and Aynisa seem to have irreversibly lost any desire to improve their Uzbek, driven by other interests, hence becoming more emotionally detached from Uzbek language. Thus, the emotional experiences that accompany the acquisition of Uzbek as L2 by all the four have been shown to be affected by institutions/environments (formal and informal learning settings), personal characteristics (ethnic identity) and outcome (overall Uzbek language proficiency). These emotions also affect their resilience (a personal trait) and motivation (outcome), which is in agreement with Shao et al’s (2020) model.

6.3 Proud but Insufficiently Challenged

This narrative covers the experiences of learning Uzbek as L2 by Setora, Shoira, Hojimat, Dinislom, O‘lmasoy and Bahodir, who have Uzbek ethnic origin. Out of them only Bahodir has an excellent command of Uzbek. Others have just a strong colloquial Uzbek. Despite the fact that some of them spent their early years in different locations inside and outside Uzbekistan, they all were educated through Russian in the 1990-2010s, and now live and work in Tashkent, which continues to be the most Russian-speaking part of Uzbekistan (Abdalova, 2023). Although their strongest academic language is Russian, which affected the purity of their Uzbek, the latter remains their main language to communicate at home and with their extended families. Moreover, for all of them except Setora and Shoira who work in international companies, Uzbek language starts gaining more and more significance in their professional lives as well.

This narrative is called “Proud but Insufficiently Challenged” because all the six are proud of their ancestral language and want their children to know it even

better than they do. Such an attitude comes mainly from being native Uzbek speakers and belonging to Uzbek ethnicity, which is in agreement with Zhao's (2022) study. At the same time, all of them mentioned that their formal learning experiences were not challenging enough to leave the comfort zone and develop strong skills in literary Uzbek. However, in order to get a full picture of how their emotions in relation to Uzbek language have formed, I will present and discuss their experiences informed by interactions with the following settings: 1) family; and 2) informal learning - in the same order.

Notably, all of these people except Shoira and Dinislom have mono-ethnic backgrounds. Their "parents always spoke Uzbek at home" (O'lmasoy), and as a result of this chosen family language policy (Curdt-Christiansen and Huang, 2020) they developed strong Uzbek understanding and speaking abilities. O'lmasoy even said that her "mother's rich language that she used very skilfully in public was an important source of motivation" to develop her own literary Uzbek, which also confirms that the attitude to the ancestral language is hugely influenced by family (Schalley and Eisenchlas, 2020).

At the same time, Setora and Dinislom noted that the level of Uzbek they use at home allows them to talk only about everyday routines. Additionally, Dinislom mentioned that "Uzbek traditions do not allow parents and children to talk on some very delicate topics such as relationships with the opposite sex (in agreement with Mee and Alimdjanova, 2001) or problems that require a more serious vocabulary. Children do not have that vocabulary in their home language and that life experience. In such situations their Uzbek mentality feels limiting", so the knowledge on the above–mentioned issues tend to be gained not from parents but from informal channels (Buckley, Barrett and Asminkin, 2004), including Internet (Gazeta.uz, 2020). However, given that Uzbek is a low-resourced language (Kuriyozov et al., 2019), not much information in Uzbek is available there, so they make use of Russian.

The better quality of education through Russian (Bezborodova, 2023) made Setora, Shirin and O'lmasoy educate their children in Russian-medium schools, too. Unlike their parents, Setora and Shoira spoke more Russian than Uzbek with

their children, which in conjunction with Russian instruction, made their children speak less Uzbek. Indeed, very often the children's language of instruction replaces the ancestral language at home, which is sometimes enabled by parents, making children more emotionally distant from their family culture (De Houwer, 2020). Additionally, it is said to cause anxiety and avoidance of speaking the ancestral language causing its low proficiency (Sevinç, 2020). In contrast, O'lmasoy speaks only Uzbek at home with her children, so they speak good Uzbek. As for Dinislom, Hojimat and Bahodir, they are singles but said that would make sure their future children know Uzbek well.

The wider living environment of all the six becomes more and more Uzbek-speaking due to the influx of the people from Uzbek regions (Olma, 2021). Setora, Shoira, Dinislom, Hojimat and Bahodir are happy to speak Uzbek, especially if this is more convenient for their interlocutors (Shodieva, 2023), and are grateful for any opportunity to practise the language. O'lmasoy also appreciates that she "was often invited to different local TV programmes, which helped [her] develop formal Uzbek speech. [She] knew the topic of the conversation in advance, so had time to prepare."

Speaking of the formal Uzbek language education encounters of all the six, it is worth noting that none of them struggled at school and university because they had good foundation skills. Although they all had good grades in Uzbek, they mentioned some flaws in the way they were taught. For instance, Bahodir said that if he relied more on his school in terms of Uzbek language learning and did not read a lot in Uzbek himself as well as did not translate a lot into Uzbek independently, he would have never learnt Uzbek. Echoing Bahodir, O'lmasoy and Dinislom did not feel that their learning was challenging enough to keep them motivated (in line with Falout and Maruyama, 2004), whereas Shoira admitted that "holding lessons entirely in Uzbek would be very helpful in terms of language practice" (in line with Panthito, 2018). Shoira also mentioned that there were such demotivating issues as large group sizes (in line with Noom-Ura, 2013) and poor classroom management (in line with Chang and Cho, 2003).

> I was in a class of 35 students. Often one teacher taught the whole class. Often there were issues with discipline in the classroom.

In addition to this, Dinislom noted the dismissive attitude of his school Uzbek language teacher to her subject and students as a negative factor for language learning (in line with Zhang, 2007). He also pointed out the inconsistency of "delivering the same grammatical material or teaching the spelling of same words by different Uzbek teachers, which left an impression that Uzbek does not have clear rules, and in order to be successful one needs either to guess or memorise everything." Furthermore, Hojimat and Setora mentioned that Uzbek was not taught interestingly, although triggering interest is said to be very important to ensure the persistence in language learning (Flyer, 2019).

> Teachers worked exclusively according to the programme: no more, no less. However, they could've organised some kind of field trips to familiarise students more with the national culture. It would be interesting if they talked more about the history of the Uzbek language, which they didn't (Setora).

In turn, Hojimat had an impression that "due to the fact that the majority of students in the class spoke Uzbek anyway, there was no need to teach them the language, so the teachers felt that their main task had already been completed."

Despite the above-mentioned difficulties, there were some bright spots in the formal Uzbek language learning experiences of Shoira, Setora, Hojimat and Dinislom. These are mainly connected to having learnt Uzbek grammar, teachers' conscientious work, warm personality and level of interaction with students, which makes sense given that the opposite factors are demotivating (Dörnyei, 2001).

> I mastered the grammar of the Uzbek language well. The teachers worked conscientiously, tried to teach us everything. (Shoira)

> I had very good and kind Uzbek teachers. There was always a positive atmosphere during the Uzbek lessons. (Setora)

> The Uzbek language lessons helped me learn Uzbek grammar. (Hojimat)
>
> At school, there wasn't much contact with the teacher. There was such a contact at the university. We were told our mistakes, had to write a lot and tell [political] news in Uzbek. All this helped me improve my Uzbek. (Dinislom)

Despite having quite strong Uzbek language skills, all the six expressed dissatisfaction with their current level of the language proficiency. However, none of them attempted to take any private course to improve their Uzbek. For instance, they all try to read in Uzbek, although it is not always easy to find time for that. Setora reads "Uzbek books to [her] daughter" and always finds some new words to learn. Dinislom learns a lot from "his professional activities connected to legislation, which is more and more communicated in Uzbek now". O'lmasoy admits that wonderful works created in Uzbek often inspire her. She used to write creatively in Russian during her school years, but now she tries to write more in Uzbek. This makes her work on her word choice and ensures the overall language flow. Apparently, these attempts are continuous because they lead directly or indirectly to learners' well-being, which is considered an important outcome of language acquisition (Shao et al., 2020).

Perhaps, among all the six, Bahodir is the most agentic learner, who has benefited a lot from informal Uzbek language learning. While studying in Russian-medium school, he "read many masterpieces of Soviet Uzbek literature, and prepared [him]self well for doing undergraduate studies in History through Uzbek". At university he met his "peers from the regions, and communicating with them, became familiar with various dialects of the Uzbek language". As a historian, he is not only familiar with modern Uzbek, but also can read and understand medieval texts in Old Turkic language. Moreover, while studying at university and even now when he teaches, he "ha[s] been translating a lot from Russian to Uzbek due to the lack of resources in the Uzbek language" (in line with Kuriyozov et al., 2019), which of course made him improve his Uzbek. Besides being a researcher and a teacher, Bahodir is a well-known Uzbek social media activist, whose Uzbek language fluency allows him not only to express

himself well in oral and written Uzbek, but also to contemplate the Uzbek language-related problems in our society. His progressive thoughts resonate a lot with young Uzbek people who are not indifferent to their language, which encourages Bahodir to continue putting effort into improving his Uzbek and researching its problems.

Summarising the stories of Setora, Shirin, O'lmasoy, Hojimat, Dinislom and Bahodir, I can say that the contribution of the formal Uzbek language education system to their Uzbek language development was rather ambiguous. Perhaps, their good foundation skills as well as better relationship with their Uzbek language teachers kept them less critical of the formal Uzbek language education system in comparison to my participants from the previous narrative who experienced a long-term failure trying to learn Uzbek. Additionally, the familial environments of Setora, Shirin, O'lmasoy, Hojimat, Dinislom and Bahodir, in contrast to those described in the subsection 6.2, were much more helpful in terms of fostering the development of Uzbek language skills. They developed an appreciative attitude to Uzbek language, which is more of a result of their familial education and continuous informal learning. Thus, the emotional experiences that accompany the acquisition of Uzbek as L2 by all the six have been shown to be affected by institutions/environments (formal and informal learning settings), personal characteristics (ethnic identity and agency) and outcome (overall Uzbek language proficiency). These emotions also affect their resilience (a personal trait), motivation and well-being (outcome), which is in agreement with Shao et al's (2020) model.

6.4 Feeling Shame

This narrative covers the experiences of learning Uzbek as L2 by Azamat, Bobomurod, Karima, Latofat, Lola, Parvina, Ruxshona, Salima, Sarvar, Sevda, Umayra and Vali, who have Uzbek ethnic origin but rather weak Uzbek skills. Despite the fact that some of them spent their early years in different locations inside and outside Uzbekistan, they all matured in the 1990-2000s in the Russian-speaking environment of Tashkent city (Abdalova, 2023), and managed to learn only very basic Uzbek. Having developed in the Russian language

continuum contributed to their initially dismissive attitude to Uzbek language. Nevertheless, now many of them care and feel proud of their ancestral tongue. Out of the 12 above-mentioned only Azamat and Vali continue experiencing either no or very little need to use Uzbek language at home and beyond due to working outside Uzbekistan and in an international company, respectively.

The title of this narrative is by no means expressive of low opinion about the 12 people discussed here. It is called “Feeling Shame” because this emotion has been identified as something common that characterised or still characterises them in relation to Uzbek language. They all admitted at least once to feel embarrassed, humiliated or ashamed for being Uzbeks and not knowing their ancestral tongue. Thus, instead of feeling sorry for making a mistake, which is a typical feature of guilt, they feel sorry for being a mistake, which is a typical feature of shame (Teimouri, 2019). This along with other experiences will be presented and discussed based on their interactions with the following settings: 1) family; 3) formal schooling; and 4) informal/private learning - in the same order. Additionally, the data from teacher interviews will be incorporated into the discussion of formal schooling experiences to verify the findings from the largest group of my participants who expressed the greatest number of concerns and suggestions in this regard.

Notably, all of these people except Bobomurod have mixed ethnic backgrounds with a prevailing Uzbek component. In addition, they comprise the second and, in some cases, even the third generation of their families who were educated through Russian language. Their parents, and especially grandparents speak Uzbek, but passed only very basic or no Uzbek skills to their children and grandchildren. In most cases maintaining Uzbek at a minimal everyday level or even mixing Russian and Uzbek, which Tashkent dialect is known for (Toshkent shevasi, 2009), was encouraged, because Uzbeks that speak only Russian often lose their national roots and traditional values that shape a desired behaviour (Jalilov, 2022). For instance, when Sevda’s father wanted to withdraw her from the Russian-medium school and put her into an Uzbek-medium lyceum, he thought this would make her “a good girl” behaving with respect to Uzbek national traditions. Nevertheless, the benefits of education through Russian (Jehan and

Khan, 2022) seemed to outweigh the desire to develop Uzbek fluency not only in the case of Sevda's but other people's parents as well. This is also evident from the fact that Lola and Ruxshona first attended Uzbek-medium childcare and preschool but afterwards continued their education through Russian.

Later, the family factor, namely marrying an ethnic Uzbek man and joining his family made some women (Lola, Sevda and Umayra) reevaluate the importance of Uzbek language in their lives. They realised and some of them were even told before their marriages that knowledge of Uzbek would be needed to communicate with their parents-in-law. Indeed, a high proficiency in the ancestral language helps communicate effectively with extended family members and avoid intergenerational challenges (Purkarthofer, 2020). However, this factor was not always motivating to learn the language and to maintain a good attitude to it. Umayra's story given below is a sad example of no progress in SLA due to the lack of empathy and patience (Chowdhury, 2021) on her in-laws' side, which even made her reject the Uzbek language for some time.

> Before I got married, my new family was told that I was a Russified Uzbek girl, who didn't religiously follow the Uzbek national traditions and didn't even know many of them. They knew my Uzbek wasn't good either, but I hoped for understanding on their part, which didn't happen. Of course, I tried to do everything I was told, but I also wanted them to listen to me. For example, when it was family dinner time (I lived then with my ex-husband's parents) I always wanted to tell them how my day went. My former father-in-law himself would even initiate our discussion by asking: "Well, how was your day?" All family members tried to share some memories about the passing day, but when it was my turn, I automatically began to speak Russian. It was enough once to hear "O'zbekcha gapiring" ("Speak Uzbek"), and that was it. I was excited to tell them something. Instead, I wasn't just interrupted, they simply put me down. Since then, probably… I wouldn't call it a trauma, but sort of a mental block has occurred. I began to stay silent, because I couldn't say it in Uzbek like in Russian, that's it, and as a result I stopped speaking Uzbek. They knew that I wasn't fluent in Uzbek, but breaking a person to suit you is against

> my understanding of healthy culture and manners of communication. My former parents-in-law speak Russian perfectly, but maybe they wanted to shame me, I don't know. I lived, or rather suffered, in that family for three years. When I got divorced, I probably had some kind of resentment against this family. It came in the form of rejecting the Uzbek language. In the heat of the moment, I decided not to speak Uzbek at all. Now everything is fine, and whenever it's necessary, I speak Uzbek.

Along with most familial experiences, the wider living environment of all the 12 was said to contribute the most to the improvement of Uzbek language skills. However, it happened at a later stage of their lives, when Uzbek gained strength in Uzbekistan after its revival (Khairi, 2016). Be it Azamat's military service experience in the camp with poorly Russian-speaking fellows, Vali's former job, which involved traveling around Uzbekistan, or the other's more frequent communication with their mainly Uzbek-medium lyceum (Sarvar's case) and university peers, staff (Latofat's case), colleagues and patients (Bobomurod's case), they all encouraged them to learn Uzbek, as they provided opportunities for authentic communication (MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome, 2011). At the same time, their interactions with the wider Uzbek-speaking environment did not always bring positive emotions or increase their desire to learn the language mainly due to criticism and humiliation for the lack of fluency.

> It was always pointed out in public that I didn't speak Uzbek well, which made me feel ashamed. (Ruxshona)

> Previously (2007-2015), even people who spoke only Uzbek used Russian words in their [Uzbek] speech, because it was trendy (as it is now with English words). Now I come across very harsh criticism from the public because of not knowing Uzbek, especially in relation to ethnic Uzbeks, making mistakes and not knowing the language. (Salima)

> Sometimes people see that I'm Sarvar, I look Uzbek, but I speak Russian. Some Uzbek-speaking guys were angry about it, they didn't like it. (Sarvar)

These exemplify language shaming, which “deprives the learner of the opportunity to learn with ease” (Amadi, 2022:4).

In contrast, the formal Uzbek language education encounters of all the 12 contributed the least to the extent to which they could master the Uzbek language. All the 12 said that they had more negative than positive experiences of learning Uzbek in formal educational settings. These involve demotivated/demotivating Uzbek language teachers, their boring teaching methods, unprofessional work ethics (tardiness, absenteeism and bribery - “accepting or soliciting money or gifts for giving good grades or missing Uzbek language classes” - Ruxshona), irrelevant tasks/homework (e.g., “learning the long poems without understanding their meaning” - Parvina) and the existing curriculum emphasising “doing grammatical exercises rather than speaking” (Umayra). These factors are largely similar to those identified by Ushioda (1994), Dörnyei (2001), Muhonen (2004), Meshkat and Hassani (2012), Vakilifard et al., (2020) and Zhumashova et al., (2023) in the context of studying other languages. Dasaeva (2021) also supported that Uzbek language teachers’ absenteeism and corruption/bribery in schools, which allows resolving any academic concerns related to Uzbek language learning, are some of the reasons why Uzbek is not respected.

Some suggestions have been offered to improve Uzbek language teaching and learning:

> I think it would be good to hold Uzbek language lessons in a playful way. Lessons should be held with integration into Uzbek culture. Pupils could visit theatres, study deeply the traditions of the Uzbek people. Another mistake, I think, was the teaching of the literary Uzbek language. They need to teach spoken language. (Sevda)

> They [Uzbek language teachers] could conduct interactive lessons based on movies, historical facts, and some interesting information. It would be interesting to learn more about the history of the language and the great figures who wrote their works in this language. (Lola)

> They [Uzbek language teachers] could've shown modern movies that have been translated into Uzbek, and read interesting books. (Vali)

> They [Uzbek language teachers] could motivate at least by demonstrating their own desire and love for their subject. My teachers taught as if they were forced to teach. They could've put more emphasis on writing. Instead of asking us to memorise poems they could've explained the meanings of the words we couldn't understand. (Salima)

All the 12 suggested teachers use engaging video and audio materials during the Uzbek lessons. According to the interviewed teachers, firstly, "the quality audio and video content in Uzbek is impossible/hard to find" (Narimon) (in line with Kuriyozov et al., 2019) or takes a long time to create" (Lutfiya). Secondly, some teachers feel that these materials are "rather more distracting than useful" (Gulshan). Thirdly, many schools still cannot simply afford to use these technological innovations. Even the schools that have them cannot use them fully, because "the teachers are not trained or supported to skilfully implement these technologies" (Marjona). Moreover, needless to say, 20 years ago having modern technological support at school was even rarer. For example, I graduated in 2000 from a secondary school located in the centre of Tashkent city, and after that for at least five more years my Uzbek language teacher, when needed, used to borrow the only TV player available in the whole school from the director's office.

The formal education experiences in many cases were accompanied by shaming ethnic Uzbek students for not being fluent in Uzbek in front of the whole class, as if it could motivate them to study hard. The people felt pressure because of belonging to Uzbek ethnicity, so the resulting humiliation was different from what the non-native Uzbeks such as Nina, Taisiya, Aynisa and Vladimir (see subsection 6.2) felt about their problems with mastering the Uzbek language. Nonetheless, the effect was similar: long-lasting neglect of Uzbek language and/or the loss of self-confidence in their abilities to improve their Uzbek skills. It is only Lola and Karima, who overcame shame and said now to feel guilt instead, but it was not an outcome of their Uzbek language learning experiences (for more

details see subsection 7.1.5). As a result, their attitudes to Uzbek changed the most. These are in agreement with Teimouri (2019: iv): “shame-proneness (and not guilt-proneness) was identified as a negative predictor of learners’ language achievement.”

Despite the above-mentioned difficulties, there were some bright spots in the formal Uzbek language learning experiences of the 12. They were often related to good teaching, which allowed them to develop basic reading, writing, comprehension and grammar skills. Unfortunately, these experiences were either insufficient or short lasting for the sustainable development of Uzbek language skills by all the 12. In other words, there was no “crossing the Rubicon,” a point of no return where one commits to act in the L2” (MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome, 2011:84). Because these skills were shaped at school, the corresponding experiences were more appreciated than related studies at a later stage.

Interestingly, out of the 12 only Sevda, Latofat and Salima continued learning Uzbek language informally and/or privately, although Umayra as well expressed “the need and willingness to improve her Uzbek”. Due to the nature of their professional activities Latofat and Salima often need to translate from and into Uzbek, respectively, for which they “use various dictionaries and online translating services”. In contrast to them, Sevda took a private Uzbek language course, which helped her improve her Uzbek before she married an Uzbek-speaking man. The teacher, materials and approach better suited her needs.

> If I was taught this way at school, I’d know Uzbek well and could express my thoughts well in Uzbek. It unblocked my speech; I now speak more confidently and without shyness.

Apparently, these efforts are persistent because they lead directly or indirectly to learners’ well-being, which is considered an important outcome of language acquisition (Shao et al., 2020).

Notably, many of the 12 suggested that Uzbek language teachers' low wages could demotivate them to do their job in public schools/universities better. For instance,

> Perhaps [Uzbek language] teachers themselves need to be motivated by higher salaries. Maybe initially they were on fire and tried to teach something, but seeing such an attitude to their subject, they were disappointed and stopped making an effort. (Azamat)

This is a salient point, especially given that teachers in private/online settings get better salaries (Rahimov, 2023). Sadly, Uzbek language teachers in public schools are said by one of my interviewees (O'g'iloy) to have even "lost [their] 15% bonus previously paid for teaching Uzbek". Now this bonus is said to be paid to English language teachers in Uzbekistan. Indeed, since 2012 English language teachers in Uzbekistan have been receiving this bonus, and now if they hold an international certificate of their English language proficiency, they are eligible for "a salary bonus of 100%" (Abdullaev, 2021:135). In contrast, Uzbek teachers do not have that. Given all these disadvantages, it is easy to conclude that in such poor/demotivating working conditions, it is only very enthusiastic teachers that will continue doing their job well.

Summarising the stories of Azamat, Bobomurod, Karima, Latofat, Lola, Parvina, Ruxshona, Salima, Sarvar, Sevda, Umayra and Vali, I can say that none of them could benefit in the long-term from the formal Uzbek language education system, whose influence was rather demotivating than encouraging. This aspect makes their experiences similar to those described in the subsection 6.2. Their familial and especially wider linguistic environments were in most cases helpful in terms of fostering the development of Uzbek language skills but not as much as those discussed in 6.3. As a result, they all understand Uzbek better than they can speak it. However, not all of them are happy with such a state of affairs and trying to improve the situation through informal/private learning, which seems more successful. However, the shame of being Uzbeks and not knowing the language had an adverse effect on learning Uzbek and the attitude to it. Similarly to the people discussed in 6.2, they do not feel guilty but dissimilarly, they cannot ignore

their Uzbek-self, which makes their feelings more painful (Teimouri, 2019). Their global selves get damaged by shame, which demotivates them to learn Uzbek (Ibid.). In contrast, guilt is known to do the opposite (Ibid.), which was evident from the experiences of Lola and Karima. Thus, the emotional experiences that accompany the acquisition of Uzbek as L2 by all the 12 have been shown to be affected by institutions/environments (formal and informal learning settings), personal characteristics (ethnic identity) and outcome (well-being). These emotions also affect their resilience (a personal trait) and motivation (outcome), which is in agreement with Shao et al's (2020) model.

6.5 Grateful

This narrative covers the experiences of learning Uzbek as L2 by Lora, Vikentiy and Elshod, who have non-Uzbek ethnic origin. They were brought up in the 1980-1990s in the widely Uzbek-speaking environment of the Uzbek regions (Dadabaev, 2004), and despite being native Russian speakers, managed to master Uzbek language skills. Uzbek continues playing an important role in their lives. This narrative is called "Grateful" because the learning experiences discussed in this subsection are recalled by Lora, Vikentiy and Elshod with gratitude. I will present and discuss their experiences informed by interactions with the following settings: 1) family; 2) wider environment; and 3) formal schooling - in the same order.

Notably, the parents of Lora, Vikentiy and Elshod speak Uzbek. Lora even remembers speaking Uzbek with her family members:

> My dad, sister and brother know the Uzbek language, and sometimes we just spoke Uzbek with each other, and this helped us a lot in life.

At the same time, the parents of all the three have never made them learn Uzbek purposefully. The need in this language was understood based on their childhood experiences. Their parents were always good examples.

> I learnt [Uzbek] by playing with the neighbouring kids as a child. That's, we had neighbours, whose children were approximately the same age as

me and my siblings. We learnt the spoken Uzbek language, communicating with neighbouring children. My neighbours in the mahalla didn't speak Russian at all, so in order to communicate, we had to talk with them in the language they spoke. This is probably the area in which we lived, the need to communicate; the need to somehow connect with people had the greatest impact on the degree of mastering the [Uzbek] language. (Lora)

My mother speaks Uzbek quite well, and I saw that when you know the language, it helps both in communication and in work. Even in my childhood, I saw that the documentation in organisations started gradually being translated into Uzbek. And these were my first steps in mastering the official business style of the Uzbek language. In general, life observations showed that if you know a language, if you're able not only to speak this language, but also draw up documents and apply it in a variety of forms, this is only an advantage for you. Therefore, I never had a question whether it's necessary, why it's necessary. Yes, it's necessary, because life itself, in the example of my family, showed that it was necessary to learn the language, and I did. (Vikentiy)

I lived in an Uzbek mahalla, I heard Uzbek from childhood. But at the same time, at my school there were a lot of ethnic Russians, Tatars, and so on. Therefore, I communicated at school mainly in Russian, and in the mahalla - in Uzbek. Then I fully switched to Uzbek in the lyceum. I moved to Uzbek-medium lyceum because teaching there was simply better. I was in fifth grade at that time. (Elshod).

As for the experiences with a wider environment, Lora and Vikentiy speak Uzbek every day, admitting that in many life situations it is always welcomed and rewarded.

Neither my children, nor my husband speak Uzbek. Well, they, of course, use my Uzbek skills if something needs to be translated, for example. So, I'm in charge of some everyday moments in life, some everyday

> household issues involving Uzbek language… Also, there are mixed marriages in our family, so I often have to speak Uzbek when I visit relatives. Additionally, many of my colleagues also speak Uzbek to me, because they know I can. The team of ground keepers, maintenance and security guards often communicate with me in Uzbek. At the same time, it happens that in the bazaar, somewhere in the city, I come across a person who doesn't speak Russian. Of course, I'm happy to speak Uzbek with him/her. (Lora)
>
> I use Uzbek to communicate with colleagues, with students, with parents, with management, acquaintances, and friends. Every day it's present in life as a living language of communication. Also, I'm the author of several textbooks in Uzbek. (Vikentiy)

It is a good linguistic support by family members and plenty of authentic situations demanding to use the language that motivate them to communicate in L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome, 2011).

As for Elshod in this regard, it is worth mentioning that he is a famous journalist and blogger who writes mainly in Uzbek. The fact that he has more than 10000 subscribers suggests that his communication in Uzbek is rather encouraged. I also came across some critical comments but they were always about Elshod's opinions and never about the way he speaks and writes in Uzbek. Apparently, these efforts are persistent because they lead directly or indirectly to learners' well-being, which is considered an important outcome of SLA (Shao et al., 2020).

The initial positive experience of Lora, Vikentiy and Elshod originated from living in an Uzbek-speaking environment and the natural need to socialise with their Uzbek-speaking peers. Thus, they had interest in language and valued it, which triggered the persistence of their efforts (Flyer, 2019; Loh, 2019). As a result, they developed such personal characteristics as resilience and agency, which had a positive impact on their formal Uzbek language education, furthered their Uzbek language skills, and fortified their positive attitude to Uzbek language (in line with Shao et al., 2020). All the three had rather positive experiences of learning Uzbek

in formal educational settings. These mainly involve motivating and empowering Uzbek language teachers, their attitudes to their subject, students and their efforts. Notably, all the three, speaking warmly about their Uzbek language teachers, remembered them by their names. However, I left only their initials in the quotes below for ethical reasons.

> At school I had a very interesting teacher of the Uzbek language. Her name was H. She was such an interesting character who loved her native language so much. She tried to transfer this love to us. She was a little strict. She often sang old Uzbek songs to us. Her intonation, the way she spoke and acted during the lesson - all this, probably, aroused interest in studying Uzbek…She motivated me with grades, and often in the class they could say: “You’ve a good pronunciation, good academic performance”, and so on. Well, this encouragement really paid off. She always praised me in front of the whole class, saying that I [successfully] participated in some competitions, in some events at school… (Lora)

> The teacher who taught me Uzbek in the lyceum from the 6th grade is K. He himself was a poet and journalist, who wrote in local newspapers, published books. In general, he was a great local intellectual. He taught very well, plus he had a special relationship with me, because I was interested in Uzbek language and literature. Starting from the fifth grade, I began to pay more attention to his subject and even then, I thought that in the future I’d become an Uzbek-writing journalist, literary critic or linguist. I must say that my dream came true. (Elshod)

> I had good teachers: A. and M. I think that they worked with me quite well, and gave me knowledge on Uzbek grammar. I respected them all. I didn’t notice any critical moments, everything satisfied me in their work. The formation of my scientific [Uzbek] language was most influenced by working with my supervisor, Professor S., reading books and articles that he wrote. He had a very good writing style. And this style motivated me to develop my ability to write in Uzbek scientific language. (Vikentiy)

Additionally, they struggled to recall any moments in their teachers' practice that would negatively affect their attitude to the Uzbek language. E.g.,

> I didn't particularly critically evaluate teachers, that is, I always tried to see some positive moments in their work and give priority to those moments when evaluating a teacher. Even if there were, perhaps, objective shortcomings, I didn't particularly pay attention to these be they the Uzbek language teachers or those of other subjects. Additionally, I always did a lot of self-studies in a variety of subjects [including Uzbek] and didn't expect any explicit teaching from the school. (Vikentiy)

These all are completely in line with Awad (2014), who demonstrated that a positive perception of a teacher's role enhances SLA.

Summarising the stories of Lora, Vikentiy and Elshod, I can say that all of them benefited from the formal Uzbek language education system, whose influence was rather motivating than discouraging. This particular aspect makes me closer to the heroes of this narrative, as I also remember my formal Uzbek language learning experiences and my Uzbek language teachers with fondness. At the same time, the experiences of Lora, Vikentiy and Elshod are very different from those discussed in the previous three narratives. Similarly to those discussed in 6.3, their familial and wider linguistic environments were also helpful in terms of fostering the development of Uzbek language skills. In contrast to those discussed in 6.2, scepticism and smiles were never mentioned by them as emotions experienced while learning/speaking/writing Uzbek. It is encouraging to know that they became fluent in Uzbek, but this also happened due to their hard independent work (agency), "the strongest predictor of L2 proficiency" (Feng and Papi, 2020:2). They generally were very appreciative of their Uzbek language learning journeys and struggled to identify issues that disadvantaged them in particular. Thus, the emotional experiences that accompany the acquisition of Uzbek as L2 by all the three have been shown to be affected by institutions/environments (formal and informal learning settings), personal characteristics (agency) and outcome (level of Uzbek language proficiency and

well-being). These emotions also affect their resilience (a personal trait) and motivation (outcome), which is in agreement with Shao et al's (2020) model.

6.6 Conclusion

Based on the above-presented narratives, all the emotional experiences come from educational encounters that can be divided into formal (primary and secondary school, lyceum, university) and informal (family, wider environment, private/online courses). Shao et al's (2020) model with its pillars such as environments/institutions, personal characteristics and outcomes, was instrumental to show the effect of different factors on these emotional experiences with Uzbek language acquisition and the resulting injustices in Uzbek context. For example, the success (outcome) and positive emotional experiences in learning Uzbek as L2 was shown to be mainly connected with positive interactions within a certain setting (institution/environment), which include having authentic/interesting lessons, helpful learning materials, and motivating/empathetic/empowering teachers, supportive families, peers/friends, private tutors and wider social circles that encourage the development of Uzbek-speaking skills by creating a welcoming/motivating environment. At the same time, learners' resilience and agency (individual characteristics) to develop Uzbek language proficiency in any setting was shown to be a key to success and the accompanying positive emotions, which underlines the importance of student agency.

However, the failure to gain proficiency in Uzbek as L2 (outcome) and the accompanying emotions were shown to be mainly linked to the discouraging factors dominating in a certain setting (institutions/environments) such as demotivated/demotivating/humiliating Uzbek language teachers, their boring/undifferentiated teaching methods/materials/assessments, unprofessional work ethics (tardiness, absenteeism and bribery), irrelevant tasks/homework, the existing curriculum emphasising doing grammatical exercises rather than speaking, humiliation, scepticism, mockery, and the discouraging language environment. They do not help develop the necessary resilience and agency (personal characteristics). These are the main sources of

injustices that must be addressed by the policymakers prior to or along with the coloniality-related issues, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

My research data suggest that predominant feelings of discouragement, insufficient challenge and shame, offered by Uzbek language education, do not help learn Uzbek, whereas feelings of guilt, pride and gratitude do the opposite. Thus, for the successful acquisition of Uzbek as L2 it is important to have a combination of positive (pride and gratitude) and negative (guilt) emotional experiences, which is in agreement with Shao et al (2020). The role of guilt in SLA is also supported by Teimouri (2019) and well aligned with the essence of pedagogies of discomfort (Boler and Zembylas, 2003), although guilt was not an outcome of the Uzbek language learning experiences. However, some of my research participants were not sufficiently challenged by the teaching practices (see subsection 6.3), and due to their experiences with a sceptical/discouraging language environment, including their families, could not understand the importance of learning Uzbek (see subsection 6.2). At the same time, some of my research participants were also humiliated (see subsection 6.2) and ashamed (see subsection 6.4) for the lack of Uzbek fluency, apparently being pointed out at how unjust their behaviours in relation to Uzbek language were. However, even if this was the intention, there was no evidence that my research participants were provided with “safe spaces in which students can process their discomfort productively” (Porto and Zembylas, 2022:329), given that humiliation happened for long and often in public. One of such transformations could be the development of a decolonial mind-set in relation to Uzbek language. Having said this, I now will discuss the factors that have a bearing on Uzbek learning-related emotional experiences, fostering or inhibiting the Uzbek language decolonisation.

Chapter 7: Factors Tied with Emotional Experiences and Affecting the Uzbek Language Decolonisation

7.1 Introduction

In chapter 4, I have demonstrated that white discomfort can be an overlapping element of both Shao et al's (2020) and Zembylas (2022) conceptual frameworks, which can help connect Uzbek language learning with Uzbek language decolonisation. Out of the identified emotional experiences of learning Uzbek as a second language, it is only shame and guilt that can be considered as manifestations of white discomfort (Zembylas, 2018). With this in mind, this section focuses on the factors that have a bearing on guilt and shame, fostering or inhibiting the Uzbek language decolonisation. It draws special attention to how learners of Uzbek as L2 could not succeed in developing the decolonial mind-set in relation to Uzbek language given their long formal and informal learning experiences. By naming the factors which foster or inhibit the development of such a mind-set, this section hopefully can help introduce decolonial discourse into Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan. These factors will be discussed in the following order: 1. Imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and cultural capitals; 2. Ambiguous perspectives of Uzbek language proficiency; 3. (De)colonial tensions driven by ethnicity and self-perception; 4. Understanding of Uzbek history; 5. Connection with the outside world; and 6) My own story - to provide better insight.

Notably, the identified factors can be classified using the same categories outlined by Shao et al's (2020) model of SLA (see Figure 4.2.1). That is to say, Uzbek language proficiency level is an outcome, ethnicity, self-perception and understanding of Uzbek history are individual characteristics, imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and cultural capitals as well as connection with the outside world are environmental/institutional influences. As it is evident from the following subsections, the extent to which they affect white discomfort (shame and/or guilt) and decolonising solidarity is different.

Thus, in this chapter, I will identify the factors that have a bearing on these emotional experiences, fostering or inhibiting the Uzbek language decolonisation. I will also share my own story. I will finish my dissertation by summing up my findings, restating the contribution of my research, specifying recommendations for practice and ideas for further exploration.

7.2 Imbalance between Uzbek and Russian Linguistic and Cultural Capitals

Previously it has been mentioned that Russian has been widely spoken in Tashkent and its suburbs (Abdalova, 2023). However, this can explain only partly why Russian prevented some of my interviewees from learning Uzbek. Their responses revealed other insights largely rooted in the perceptions of the comparative powers/attractiveness of these two languages and corresponding cultures, which I am going to discuss below. First, I will elaborate on the prestige of the Russian language in Uzbekistan and why it is the preferred linguistic choice according to my interviewees. Second, I will demonstrate how discouraging is the current support for Uzbek language teaching and learning. Third, I will compare the attitudes towards Russian and Uzbek cultures, and finally, conclude on the Russian hegemony, lack of Uzbek decolonial discourse and their emotional indicators.

The prestige of Russian was pointed out by many of my interviewees. Additionally, Nina considered the fact that Russian prevented learning Uzbek as “a minor side effect of Russian colonialism”, from which Uzbek people not only suffered but benefited as well. Russian opened many doors for Uzbek people, giving them greater opportunities for professional development (Eraliev and Urinboev, 2023). Furthermore, Nina pointed out that “in Uzbekistan, Russians did what they could do well, namely teaching Russian. They could not teach Uzbek. Uzbek language teaching, [according to Nina], should have been developed well by Uzbek people; however, over the years they did not seem to come up with an effective way of teaching their language”. The latter fact has been supported both by CABAR (2020) and by the responses of the interviewed teachers of Uzbek as L2. However, the teachers cannot be fully responsible for that.

The inaccessible Uzbek language curriculum and textbooks prescribed from above and used for years were the main subject of their criticism, which is in agreement with CABAR (2020). One of the interviewed teachers (Dildora) even "contributed to the development of an alternative textbook, where the learning material for the first time was laid out based on the CEFR proficiency levels". However, before their textbook was published and embedded into the school practice, she and her colleagues "faced huge opposition from the authors who monopolised the production of the Uzbek language textbooks in the country for years". The latter issue has been also raised earlier by Asanov (2021c).

All these are aggravated by the fact that in many public schools in Uzbekistan there are no good specialised classrooms for Uzbek language lessons. The Uzbek language classes are said to "often take place in the gym or in small storage-like rooms that do not even meet the space requirement for each student" (Dildora). I also remember that when I was a student, my Uzbek lessons were held in a very small room that used to be a toilet. This suggests that the school and the upper-level administration do not seem to care at all about Uzbek teaching and learning. At the same time, they agree to install video cameras in each room to be able to watch, discuss the recordings and send them later to the district level for further evaluation (Stryker, 2021). One of the interviewed teachers (O'g'iloy) said that in such working conditions she feels "disrespected and distrusted".

However, what makes most of the teachers' job difficult is not the lack of qualification or proper training but the noticed "negative/disdainful attitude of students to the Uzbek language, which is nurtured by their families, who prioritise learning Russian over learning Uzbek" (Bahodir but also echoed by Gulshan, Lutfiya, O'g'iloy, Marjona, Zarina). This recently has been taken to the extreme by ethnic Uzbek parents who place their children with zero Russian skills in Russian-medium schools. One of my interviewees, Dildora, said:

> This will make children struggle, cause depression, aggression and undermine their self-esteem. They'll know neither Russian nor Uzbek, and it'll be hard for

them to learn and express their thinking. Eventually they'll come to the point when they say: "I know nothing. I'm nothing."

Consequently, they become more emotionally distant from their parents (Eshmurodov, 2018; De Houwer, 2020) and eventually, from the Uzbek language that they could learn best from their parents but view it not as prestigious as Russian.

In connection to this, many of my interviewees admitted that they and many of their acquaintances used to treat Uzbek as the language of "uncivilised", narrow-minded and traditionalist people, which is a typical sign of language coloniality (Roche, 2019). For instance,

> At school I believed Uzbek is the "babai" language [the language of the uncivilized]. My university teachers always underlined the very low level of knowledge of Uzbek-speaking groups. Now I don't think they're uncivilized (Azim).

> I had classmates who knew only Uzbek. Their parents chose a Russian-medium school for them because of the prestige, because wanted their children to speak Russian. Those children didn't like me. They often asked me: "Why do you speak more Russian? Do you consider yourself Russian?" Additionally, my views on many issues differed from theirs. I had an internal cultural conflict with them, which manifested itself when discussing various topics. For example, when discussing early marriages, I believed that due to their tradition-influenced mentality, they'd consider this issue in a very narrow traditional way, whereas the opinion of Russian-speaking Uzbeks like me would be more progressive. Thus, I started thinking that Uzbek is the language of narrow-minded people. I wouldn't like to speak it. Now I want to speak it. I think I should know it well (Karima).

However, as it was justly pointed out by Karima, "these people didn't have access to resources in Uzbek to expand their outlook, because those resources were available only in Russian, which they didn't know".

It has been also said that Uzbek cannot compete with Russian in such areas as science and medicine, as Uzbek is a low-resourced language (Matlatipov, Tukeyev and Aripov, 2020). I personally witnessed how low-resourced it is, when I could not find any application that would help me transcribe my interviews held in Uzbek. However, Elshod suggests that the lack of resources is not the only reason why native Uzbeks still gravitate towards Russian (in agreement with Yusupova in Kurbanbaeva, 2023):

> Besides nostalgia for the Soviet era (in agreement with Dadabaev, 2015), this gravitation manifests itself in the form of irrational respect for the Russians, which, probably, was formed during the Soviet years. A lot of Uzbeks say: “Russians are good, but we’re bad, Russians are honest, we’re dishonest”, and so on. After all, Russian was taught better in Soviet times, and more specialists were trained in Russian. Also, it’s dissatisfaction with the current situation (in agreement with Dadabaev, 2021), which nevertheless affects linguistic preferences. After all, independent Uzbekistan, let's say, isn’t the most developed country, where there are many problems, few good specialists (in agreement with Akimov, 2020). Probably, people unconsciously compare and say that it used to be better under Russia.

Thus, it is still appropriate to talk about Russian hegemony in Uzbekistan. Although it is said to be more negotiated now between other powers such as the USA and China, Russian hegemony continues to be strong (Costa Buranelli, 2018). It “still rests on historical and cultural legacies, requires constant reinforcement” (Lewis, 2015:70) and more importantly receives this reinforcement, which is evident from the above responses of my research participants. Additionally, the focus on self rather than on behaviour (e.g., we’re bad instead of we did something bad) can be read between the lines in Elshod’s above comment, which is very typical for the manifestation of shame (Teimouri, 2019). And again, as it can be seen from the above quote, this shame does not foster Uzbek decolonisation.

Using Zembylas’s (2022) framework as a three-step path to achieve decolonisation: 1) discomfort; 2) solidarity, and 3) constant practice of (1) and (2), it can be said that the

current power and capital imbalance between Russian and Uzbek does not seem to allow for most of the interviewed Uzbek language learners to go beyond step 1. The above-mentioned shame is discomforting but because it threatens global self, the "desire to escape, or become defensive" (Teimouri, 2019:13) apparently outweighs the importance of solidarity. Summarising this subsection, it can be said that the current imbalance in power and attractiveness of Russian and Uzbek will perpetuate the coloniality of the latter, unless serious measures are taken to increase the prestige of Uzbek language by solving the above-mentioned problems.

7.3 Ambiguous Perspectives of Uzbek Language Proficiency

In this subsection I will talk about the extent to which Uzbek language proficiency contributes to Uzbek language decolonisation. For this, first, I will discuss the overall trend and the hidden coloniality of the limitations existing in measuring the Uzbek language proficiency and gaining it. After that, I will consider why being fluent in Uzbek does not necessarily lead to Uzbek language decolonisation.

As Porto and Zembylas (2020) and Nussbaum (2010) suggest, the level of L2 should be good enough to influence the development of a decolonial mind-set in relation to that language. Most of those, who lacked Uzbek fluency and were ashamed of that, failed to see coloniality in the Russian influence on Uzbek language. For example,

> Researcher:
>
> Do you think Russian prevented learning Uzbek?
>
> Sarvar:
>
> No. This is just some kind of internal acceptance or rejection of the Uzbek language. Also, the Russian language doesn't prevent a person from learning German, Spanish, or English. Why should Russian language prevent learning Uzbek? I think it's just a person's attitude to language.
>
> Researcher:

Do you consider the influence of Russian on Uzbek as colonial because Uzbek wasn’t as widespread in Soviet times as Russian was, and that there are still people in our country who don’t learn it?

Sarvar

No. My parents, my wife's parents speak Russian perfectly and at the same time, communicate in Uzbek since childhood. I’ve never heard from them that this is somehow connected with some kind of coloniality. This is just speculation. Intelligent people can choose a language for a clear presentation of their thoughts. What's wrong with this?

In contrast, my interviewees with a stronger decolonial stance, who are more critical in regard to the current attitude to Uzbek language in Uzbekistan, have at least working knowledge of Uzbek language. This criticality is evident from the following dialogue:

Researcher:

Do you think that the native Uzbek speakers themselves are in solidarity with each other on the issue of decolonisation of the Uzbek language?

Bahodir:

No. Many people treat Uzbek with disdain. Many consider speaking only Uzbek as an indicator of backwardness. Students who came to Uzbekistan from Russia don't try to learn Uzbek, because they see representatives of the titular nation treat their language with disdain. I also know a lot of nationalist people who advocate for their native language, but all their children and grandchildren study in Russian-medium schools. Go to any mahalla (neighbourhood) in Tashkent and ask, everyone will tell you that their children are learning Russian or English with a tutor. As for Uzbek, they don't say anything. They believe Russian and English give them status, prestige. Uzbek doesn't.

However, Uzbek language proficiency in case of all my interviewees is a self-ranked parameter and hence, lacks precision due to no standardised system to assess Uzbek language skills (Gafforov and Kosimov, 2022), which only helps associate Uzbek with underdevelopment and aggravates its coloniality (Roche, 2019). This is viewed by many of my interviewees as a serious obstacle to improving Uzbek. For instance,

> There are no tools for assessing Uzbek proficiency. No one knows how much you need to learn and why. Well, English and other languages have proficiency levels, and certain criteria exist for each of them. We don't have it [for Uzbek]. (Vladislav)

Given that this situation does not motivate people to further their Uzbek, this, following the logic of Porto and Zembylas (2020) and Nussbaum (2010), will not develop a decolonial mind-set.

Additionally, relatively low Uzbek linguistic and cultural capitals (see subsection 7.2) do not seem to promise much for those who want to become proficient in Uzbek, which is evident from the following conversation:

> Researcher:
>
> How do you see the future generations of your family in terms of the Uzbek language?
>
> Nina:
>
> I'm sure my son won't speak Uzbek. I think he'll have enough opportunities, environment or something else to survive here without Uzbek, like his parents. Or he'll be forced to leave. I don't see him consciously opening the textbook and studying. If any consciousness comes, the choice will be in favour of some other language that'll give him the opportunity to see the world. Even if he says: "Mom, I'll learn Uzbek", where will he go with it?

Moreover, out of my interviewees there are those who already have good Uzbek but do not exhibit decolonial thinking. This is evident from their more frequent use of Russian as a way to hide their origin. E.g.,

> Hojimat:
>
> I've one more reason why I speak more Russian. I'm from the Samarkand region; we've a peculiar dialect there. I came to Tashkent to study. Tashkent has a different dialect. By the speech of a person, you can find out where he's from. Sometimes, depending on this, the attitude towards a person can change.
>
> Researcher:
>
> Have you ever experienced any negative attitude towards yourself here because of this?
>
> Hojimat:
>
> Yes, sometimes. In order not to be treated like a visiting person from the province, I had to speak more in Russian in Tashkent.

These experiences indicate that Tashkent Uzbeks often mistreat the people from regions, whose peculiar dialects easily reveal them. In order not to be exposed to language prejudice (Birch, 1998), in other words, not to be treated like a stranger or a visiting person from the province, they have to speak Russian instead of Uzbek (in line with Turaeva-Hoehne, 2014), which undermines the position of the latter. Bahodir, who teaches History in one of Tashkent schools, confirmed this fact.

> Last year I worked at a private school. There were only Uzbeks in my class. Many of them are from the regions. They are embarrassed by their dialects, but they don't speak the Tashkent dialect. When they communicate with each other, they switch to Russian or English. In their circle they aren't shy [to speak their dialect], but when they face a bigger audience, they hide their regional origin.

They seem to feel uncomfortable with their language, which is indicative of colonial rather than decolonial thinking.

Using Zembylas's (2022) framework as a three-step path to achieve decolonisation: 1) discomfort; 2) solidarity, and 3) constant practice of (1) and (2), it can be said that the ambiguous perspectives of Uzbek language proficiency do not seem to allow for most of the interviewed Uzbek language learners to go beyond step 1. The above-mentioned shame, be it from lacking the Uzbek language fluency or speaking an Uzbek dialect, is discomforting but because it threatens global self, the "desire to escape, or become defensive" (Teimouri, 2019:13) apparently outweighs the importance of solidarity. All the above-mentioned suggest that this factor is unlikely to foster Uzbek language decolonisation. It only perpetuates the colonial feelings of linguistic inferiority and awkwardness (Roche, 2019) and, more importantly, implies that knowing Uzbek well is probably important but insufficient for Uzbek language decolonisation.

7.4 (De)colonial Tensions Driven by Ethnicity and Self-perception

After having considered the effect of Uzbek language proficiency on Uzbek language decolonisation, it would be logical to consider the contribution of my participants' ethnic origin to this, given the strong link between language and ethnicity (Fishman, 2017). I will start this by describing the general trend observed. Then, I will discuss the relevant findings from the experiences of my interviewees with non-Uzbek ethnic origin. Finally, I will discuss the relevant findings from the experiences of my research participants with Uzbek ethnic origin and conclude on whether there is decolonising solidarity among them.

Although most of my ethnic Uzbek interviewees ranked their Uzbek skills from intermediate to high, some of my research participants with non-Uzbek ethnic origin (Vikentiy and Elshod) were revealed to have even stronger Uzbek skills, which was evident from them not just freely speaking but also publishing and doing research in Uzbek. Additionally, belonging to a certain ethnic group did not perfectly match strong decolonial ideas or thoughts that can be characterised as decolonial in relation to

Uzbek language. Nonetheless, some valuable insights can be gained from considering the factor of ethnicity more carefully.

Out of my interviewees with non-Uzbek ethnic origin, almost none said anything about the Uzbek language related colonial struggles, which was generally expected. In fact, many of them admitted with no particular surprise or regret that Uzbek started gaining power in Uzbekistan. The only commonly raised coloniality-related issue was whether Russian prevented them from learning Uzbek or not, which divided them into two almost equal groups. Thus, Taisiya (ethnic Bashkir-Ukrainian) and Nina (ethnic Russian), who were brought up in the 1980-1990s in the widely Russian-speaking environment of Tashkent city and its suburbs (Peremkulov, 2021), admitted the negative influence of Russian on the development of their Uzbek skills:

> This is because almost everyone knew Russian then. Many are well understood in Russian even now. Many people think Uzbek isn't necessary. (Taisiya)

> Uzbekistan was a part of the USSR, and the presence of Russian language here was very significant. Undoubtedly, the prevalence of Russian prevented us from learning Uzbek. (Nina)

In comparison to Nina and Taisiya, Vladislav (ethnic Russian) was more critical and thorough about the influence of Russian language:

> The influence of Russian is absolutely destructive. This has been going on, probably since the creation of the republic in 1924. [It is an] active and merciless Russification in all spheres of life, including everyday life. As a result, many representatives of the titular nation don't know their language. Well, of course, in everyday life, people naturally speak their own language, which they speak from birth. Of course, they'll communicate in Uzbek. But it's just that I work in the technical field ... in particular, on the railway, and there has never been any Uzbek language, because all the machinists and dispatchers in the subway and on the railroad speak only Russian. There are regulations, and you can't speak another language there, you just can't. It is forbidden. Because you won't be

> understood, and there will be a lot of problems. It's prescribed so. And all this specific documentation is written, of course, only in Russian.

Thus, Vladislav's argument can serve as an acknowledgement of linguistic imperialism in action (Ravishankar, 2020), whereas it is hard to say the same about Nina's and Taisiya's words, as they might be simply an excuse.

In contrast, Lora (ethnic Korean), Vikentiy (ethnic Russian), Aynisa (ethnic Tatar) and Elshod (ethnic Crimean Tatar-Uighur), who, except Aynisa, were brought up in the 1980-1990s in the widely Uzbek-speaking environment of the Uzbek regions (Dadabaev, 2004), said that Russian did not prevent them from learning Uzbek. Although it is tempting to connect the living environment with the language acquisition due to solidarity with that environment, the actual reasons were "the need to socialise" (Lora) and "to be able to make a career in the state sector" (Vikentiy), which are rather based on self-interest that has nothing to do with decolonising solidarity (Morris, 2020). The latter can be true only in the case of Elshod:

> I wanted to be a full-fledged member of Uzbek society and even experienced an ethnic identity crisis. Having Crimean Tatar and Uighur blood, I could've talked about decolonisation as of my personal experience[20]. However, what directed me to this decolonisation path were Uzbek language, history and culture, which I've a great love for.

Notably, Lora's case is similar to that of Elshod. She is an ethnic Korean, whose ancestors were deported from the Far East to Uzbekistan in Stalin's time (Kim, Surzhik and Mamychev, 2021). However, dissimilarly to Elshod, Lora could not embrace Uzbek

[20] For more detailed information on the colonial struggles of Crimean Tatars and Uighurs please see Engelhardt and Shestakova (2022) and Turdush (2022), respectively.

to the extent that would allow her to see its coloniality, although she admitted the great influence of Russian language on Uzbek:

> In Uzbek there are such words, for example, as “kartoshka” (potato), which don’t have the Uzbek equivalent. Even if we take obscene language, there are also a lot of Russian words still there, so it’s impossible to eradicate them, as they’ve become firmly established in the lexicon and used by many generations.

Perhaps, the expertise in Uzbek philology would allow Lora to see more subordination of Uzbek to Russian. At the same time, it can be argued that the knowledge of Uzbek linguistics is not sufficient to view the language coloniality either, as many interviewed Uzbek language teachers being ethnic Uzbeks and experts in the language they teach, could see the only element of Russian colonial influence on Uzbek language in the presence of Russian loan words in it. For example,

> I understand the decolonisation of a language as a struggle for its purity. However, in light of the presence of so many unresolved problems in the Uzbek language, I consider it simply ridiculous to prioritise the struggle for its purity now. (Gulxumor)

Nonetheless, many of the interviewed Uzbek language teachers complained about the unequal current preferences and support for Uzbek and other languages. E.g.,

> For example, a prestigious university like ours doesn’t have any society that works on developing international students' Uzbek language skills. There used to be one (ten years ago), now there isn’t. The reason for its absence is that foreign students are required to know Russian or English. The Uzbek language isn’t considered important for them. Another reason is that our university teachers have mastered teaching in Russian or English. This was also done in favour of foreigners. As for other students, Uzbek was taught in different ways: it was taught to non-Uzbek speaking groups (before two years, now one semester), to non-specialist groups (it’ll be quit in three years), who needs to know their field-related terminology in Uzbek. The reason for the shortening of

the hours is the renewal of the educational system and the transition to the system of credit modules (Narimon).

The main difficulty is the lack of materials in Uzbek. There are very few sources in Uzbek. You have to look for them. In contrast, sources in English or French are plentiful. In addition, the attitude of some of my students towards the subject of the Uzbek language makes my work difficult. They say: "Why do we need the Uzbek language? If I enter a university, none will ask me about Uzbek." (Lutfiya)

As for my ethnic Uzbek interviewees, out of 18 only three people (Lola, Karima and Bahodir) have clearly identified the current situation with Uzbek language in Uzbekistan as colonial, which can be seen in: 1) heavy influence of Russian on Uzbek (in agreement with Khairi, 2016); 2) low respect to Uzbek (in agreement with Norov and Amanklichev, 2020); 3) continuous epistemicide (lack of comprehensive content in Uzbek related to different areas of knowledge (in agreement with Shazamonov, Nazarova and Djuraev, 2021)) and closing the Centre of Uzbek language development[21]); and 4) general lack of truly decolonial behaviour of the national elite and the society (in agreement with Gorshenina, 2021). Others (15) did not do it, but offered some interesting insights into the influence of Russian language on the degree of mastering Uzbek language in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. For instance, some of them admitted that “Russian lowered the importance of learning Uzbek” (Umayra), prevented them from learning it (Vali and Azamat) or “stopped the development of Uzbek language” (Salima). At the same time, Umayra and Parvina would not mind if Russian was given the status of a second state language in Uzbekistan. Although there is nothing bad in having a plurality of state languages, having two of them with unequal powers will be unlikely to foster the decolonisation of the weaker (Amorim, Baltazar and Soares, 2020).

[21] At the time of interviewing Bahodir it was closed, but it was reopened in April of 2023 (Abduhalimova, 2023).

Some other interviewees suggested that Russian should not be blamed in the current situation with Uzbek, which is rather rooted in “our people’s irresponsibility” (Sevda), personal preferences (Lola, Sarvar), impact of the living environment (Latofat, Parvina) and the pro-Russian political course of our country (Bobomurod and Ruxshona). In general, these responses confirm the following thought: “[...]languages do not kill languages; their own speakers do, in giving them up, although they themselves are victims of changes in the socio-economic ecologies in which they evolve” (Mufwene, 2002:20). Nonetheless, only Vali and Azamat saw no problem in treating Uzbek language as unneeded, because for them it is a matter of personal or familial choice based on such purely practical issues as where one lives and works. All others were critical of those, including their own children, who do not even try to learn Uzbek in spite of having lived in Uzbekistan for years.

However, these 15 have never perceived their own challenges to learn Uzbek as (post)colonial, and hence, have never experienced the emotions of regret and/or resentment in this regard. I think Sevda formulated it the best:

> I didn’t think about it that deeply. I took Russian for granted. In addition, both my mum and dad spoke Russian. Colonialism carries a negative connotation, but I don’t see anything negative in the influence of the Russian language.

Thus, many of them have no sense of colonisation. In other words, they failed “to recognise the complex and “difficult” emotional histories of colonisation”, which is the first step towards decolonisation according to Zembylas’s (2022:16) framework. The existence of two oppositely minded camps, namely those who perceive the struggle to learn Uzbek as colonial and want to change this, along with those who do not demonstrate (de)colonial tensions among my ethnic Uzbek interviewees, suggests that there is no decolonising solidarity between them, which should be the second step towards decolonisation according to Zembylas (2022). This finding can be considered as a contribution to more nuanced understanding of decolonising solidarity as not only solidarity *with* as suggested by Zembylas (2022), but solidarity *within/among*.

Additionally, solidarity is an important step towards not only decolonisation but agency as well (Zembylas, 2023). This perfectly explains why not having developed decolonising solidarity, most of the interviewed ethnic Uzbeks fail to choose decolonisation as an option for their ancestral language. Moreover, solidarity gives the necessary instrumentality to unveil the hidden colonial logic in everyday life, which is the third step in Zembylas's (2022) affective decolonisation framework. For instance, Bahodir questions the decoloniality of transition to Latin-based Uzbek alphabet, which was actually initiated by Soviet (imperial) power, whereas Karima thinks of changing her last name, as the ending -eva holds Russian colonial legacy. Thus, ethnicity without the 'appropriate' self-perception, decolonising solidarity and agency is unlikely to lead to Uzbek language decolonisation. However, given that ethnic Uzbeks comprise 83.8% of the total population of Uzbekistan (CIA, 2021), ethnicity equipped with the above-mentioned qualities can contribute considerably to decolonisation.

7.5 Understanding of Uzbek History

In this subsection I will talk about how the understanding of Uzbek history contributes to Uzbek language decolonisation. For this, first, I will describe the overall trend observed. Second, I will consider the age-dependent understanding of Uzbek history by my older and younger interviewees. There I will share my experience of studying Uzbek history in secondary school and why I failed to develop decolonial thinking in the 1990s. Third, by drawing on the pedagogies of discomfort, decolonial pedagogies and comparing them with the teaching and learning experiences then and now, I will explain why History and Uzbek studies did not result in the formation of decolonial mind-set in my interviewees. Forth, I will highlight the role of parents in the formation of the attitude towards the time under Russia. Fifth, I will present the data obtained from Uzbek language teachers on decolonial pedagogies. Sixth, I will contemplate whether equity/social justice should be prioritised over decolonisation in the current condition of Uzbek language education. Seventh, I will talk about the importance of not being selective when trying to implement decolonisation. I will finish this subsection by making final remarks regarding what else can be a source of developing a decolonial stance besides deep knowledge of Uzbek history.

My interviewees with good knowledge of Uzbek and strong decolonial ideas or thoughts that can be characterised as decolonial have also demonstrated good understanding of history in general and Uzbek history, in particular. Unlike others, they were not only positive but critical about Russian influence on Uzbekistan and Uzbek language. In fact, the older interviewees studied Uzbek history in the middle of the 1990s, when anti-Russian rhetoric in Uzbekistan was quite strong (Laurelle, 2009) and embedded in the lessons and textbooks. I remember that in 1997-1998 this discourse was discomforting for me as a holder of colonial legacy, and for my history teacher, an ethnic Russian woman, who could not know the pedagogies of discomfort developed by Boler only in 1999. As for my younger interviewees, they studied the Russian conquest, Russian imperial and the Soviet period of Uzbek history in the second half of the 2010s, when the anti-Russian rhetoric became much softer, almost neutral (Gorshenina, 2021). Thus, they simply were not challenged by discomfort, which is the first step towards decolonisation according to Zembylas (2022). The same arguments can explain why some Uzbek language teachers not discomforting at all and/or shaming native Uzbeks publicly for not knowing Uzbek, and hence trying to discomfort them, could not even motivate them to learn the language, to say nothing of developing decolonial thinking in relation to Uzbek.

Additionally, according to Zembylas (2022), affective/white discomfort is ethically tackled by developing decolonising solidarity to be nurtured by decolonial pedagogies that should be creative, transitive and relational. Many interviewees mentioned boring, very old-fashioned ways of teaching Uzbek (see Chapter 6), which cannot be called creative. The delivery of grammar and vocabulary in a very passive way does not exemplify the action-driven positionality, which is a feature of transitive pedagogies (Ibid.). Speaking of a typical Uzbek language teacher, one of my interviewees, Nina, said that “usually it’s a young woman of Uzbek ethnicity who has just graduated from a pedagogical university, who is about to get married or has already got married. She’ll give birth once, twice, three times as dictated by our customs. She’ll be extremely busy, won’t have time for professional developments” and hence, will not stay committed to a relational stance (Ibid.).

Notwithstanding that an affective/white discomfort was not addressed pedagogically, it was also confronted by students' parents who are said to "idealise the Soviet past" (Karima) (in line with Shozamonov, Nazarova and Djuraev, 2021). Given younger Uzbek people's huge respect to an older generation in general, and parents in particular (Alimjonova, 2021), it is clear that this discomfort was not followed by decolonising solidarity and could not result in a decolonial mind-set. All these suggest the absence of the appropriate pedagogies to nurture decolonising solidarity, so the absence of the second step towards decolonisation according to Zembylas's (2022) framework.

In order to see whether this finding can be supported or not, the teachers of Uzbek as L2 were asked whether they use decolonial pedagogies in their practice. It is worth noting that only one teacher (Zarina) out of ten knew about these pedagogies but did not have a chance to apply them:

> I studied decolonial pedagogies at university, but due to the lack of teaching hours I felt obliged first of all to cover the content of my course.

Others know nothing about decolonial pedagogies (Gulxumor), do not use them (Karomat), or even question why to be bothered with them:

> Since I work in an international school, I don't teach the local curriculum. That is, I'm not teaching based on Russian educational principles, which had a strong influence on our educational system[22]. (Marjona)

> Russian orientalists made a huge contribution to the development of the modern Uzbek (in line with Lukashova, 2021). But didn't they try to make Uzbek more understandable for Russian-speaking people in this way? To some extent, I also

[22] Being international, however, does not make a school approach automatically decolonial. For more information on the hidden coloniality of international schools see e.g., Molnar, 2020.

> use the results of their work in my teaching, and this helps my students learn Uzbek. So, their method isn't so bad. In this regard, I don't consider the influence of the Russian language on Uzbek as purely negative. After all, the methods of teaching Uzbek developed in Soviet times seemed to be better than the current ones. (Gulshan)
>
> Any influence has both advantages and disadvantages. It's hard to judge without experiencing it. In my opinion, the most important thing is to continue moving forward. We shouldn't think if it was good or bad, but what to do now and prepare our children for it. (Dildora)

Bearing in mind the mainly disadvantageous experiences of learning Uzbek as L2 that were shared (see Chapter 6), it can be suggested that maybe not decolonisation but social justice, namely equitable formal Uzbek language education should become a priority in the current Uzbek context. After all, Uzbek is not an endangered language (see subsection 3.3.2), which unlike many Indigenous languages of Africa, Oceania and America is a medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels (see subsection 2.2.1). The main problem of Uzbek, besides not being a language of modernisation and prestige (Alimdjanov, 2019), is that it has not become a language that unites all Uzbekistanis (Schylter, 2008). The serious social justice implications of the switch to the Latin-based Uzbek alphabet introduced in 1995 as a decolonial option[23] can, perhaps, serve as a best example of how decolonisation can marginalise rather than include, perpetuate existing socioeconomic inequalities, limit access to cultural heritage available predominantly in the Cyrillic-based Uzbek script and create intergenerational challenges (Schweitzer, 2020). This problem is one of the many unresolved issues connected to how Uzbek is taught and learned and the related

[23] The Latin-based Uzbek alphabet was first introduced in Soviet time. Hence, the decoloniality of this option is contentious, as it can also be seen as reproduction of colonial structures.

injustices (see Chapter 6), which can be addressed prior to implementing its decolonisation at the full scale.

It is also worth bearing in mind that decolonisation is a costly measure. In light of Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, which wanted to distance itself from the former in terms of language as well (Fortuin, 2022), the same scenario has also some risks for Uzbekistan. Instead, it makes more sense to focus on Uzbek language education to make it more equitable/just and more attractive, which will help unite the nation around its titular language.

Notably, Zembylas (in Barreiro et al., 2020) also supports the context-specific prioritisation of social justice over decolonisation or vice versa. Logically, equitable Uzbek language education will also reduce shame known as a demotivator of SLA (Teimouri, 2019). Moreover, it can increase the culpability, which has a positive impact on SLA (Ibid.) of those who were reluctant to learn Uzbek before the new, more equitable/socially just conditions are created, after which the Uzbek language decolonisation might become a more feasible task.

At the same time, knowing Uzbek history and criticising Russian colonialism does not seem to be sufficient to develop decolonial thinking. According to Elshod, one of my research participants, along with criticising Russian colonialism we also must be critical about “colonial legacies [that] are selectively appropriated and creatively reinvented” (Getachew and Mantena, 2021:382) even if they originated from the territory of modern Uzbekistan. However, we have a monument to Amir Timur in the central square of Tashkent (Zarkar, 2015). Although Amir Timur is considered a key figure in the modern history of Uzbekistan, on which, in general, the ideology of our country is now built (Kurzman, 1999), it cannot be denied that he created an empire. In connection to this, Elshod says that “our historiography, our historians don’t yet know well what decolonisation is (in line with Gorshenina, 2021). Probably, because of this, they still have such mutually exclusive arguments and views regarding our history”.

Interestingly, how in such unfavourable conditions can one develop a critical/decolonial stance to the times under Russia and Russian influence on Uzbek language? Two of

my interviewees (Bahodir and Elshod) did it through studying Uzbek history, which became an important part of their current professional activities. They gained decolonial ideas through independent studies. The latter is also true about the others but they developed these ideas from traveling or communicating with people from the countries with a strong decolonising agenda, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

7.6 Connection with the Outside World

In this subsection I will discuss the impact of the connection with the outside world on the development of a decolonial mind-set. For this, first, I will describe my observations in this regard. Next, I will outline the possible reasons for them.

There is an important commonality among my interviewees with strong decolonial ideas or thoughts that can be characterised as decolonial. They all have travelled a lot outside Uzbekistan, worked in the countries with a strong decolonising agenda (e.g., India, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Baltic countries) or were influenced by people with strong decolonial thinking. These experiences made them feel sorry for their dismissive attitude to the national language, reinforced/strengthened their respect for it and the importance of learning it, taught them lessons about how other people care for their language and made them solidary with the postcolonial struggles of other nations. This can be best illustrated by Karima's words:

> My colonial thinking was hit hard by my Georgian course-mate who took me to the Museum of the Soviet occupation in Tbilisi and told me that when the Bolsheviks occupied Georgia, they wanted to eliminate the Georgian alphabet. This script has no analogues in the world. Then the Georgians went to the rally, resisting such a decision. Despite the fact that they were all shot, even more Georgians participated in the next rally in support of the Georgian alphabet, thus

defending the official status of the Georgian language in their country[24]. Georgia was the only republic of the USSR where the national language had a higher status than Russian[25]. I never thought it was possible to love one's language so much…

When I returned to Tashkent, I had questions: "Why is everything here in Russian? Are we Uzbekistan or Russia? What have we done, what have I done for my language? Why do Georgians love their language so much? Why can't we do that?" All this changed my attitude towards Uzbek. I realised I'd no longer be dismissive of it.

The inferred feeling of guilt is important: "what have I done…" underlines the regret for actions, which is typical for guilt (Teimouri, 2019), and it seems to foster Uzbek decolonisation. This emotion became even clearer in the later conversation with Karima:

Researcher:

Have you ever experienced resentment or regret due to the fact that your Russian is stronger than Uzbek?

[24] Karima mixed up the 1956 and the 1978 protests in Georgia. The first one was a two-day massacre with a clear anti-Soviet colour, whereas the second one was bloodless and provoked by the new constitutional changes abandoning the sole state status of Georgian language in Georgia (Amirejebi-Mullen, 2012). It had nothing to do with the Georgian alphabet. Nonetheless, both protests demonstrate decolonial intentions.

[25] This is a factual mistake. The titular languages of Armenia and Azerbaijan also enjoyed this status (Olson, Pappas and Pappas, 1994).

Karima

> I felt more guilt than resentment. A visit to our museum of memory of the repression victims after rethinking our history and trips to Georgia and Kazakhstan made me perceive all the information that I knew from the school history course in a different way. The emotional story of the guide about the sad events of those years awakened in me those feelings that I hadn't experienced before. I wanted to go up to the photographs of Qodiriy, Fitrat and Cho'lpon[26] and ask them to forgive me for not loving my language properly, that I thought that it was the Soviet Union that gave us education, although even before the Bolsheviks came to power, it was the Jadids who financed the education in Europe for many representatives of local youth (in line with Yusupova and Kadirov, 2023). Of course, the past can't change, but if Central Asian countries united, we wouldn't be captured by either the Russian or the British Empire, which also planned to do so[27]. If there was resentment and aggression, they were short-term. They were replaced by a sense of guilt.

All the above-mentioned suggests that decolonial ideas permeate Uzbek society mainly from outside. According to Elshod who is an expert in decolonisation, this is not a coincidence but rather a pattern:

> It seems that our region was always lagging behind in terms of ideological development. Even when we talk about the Islamic renaissance of the 9th-12th centuries, we are proud of Khorezmi, Fergani and so on. But they simply came from our region, which was considered a far province, and worked somewhere else (in line with e.g., Tatarchenko, 2023; Rasulova, 2022). Jadidism as an

[26] These three are famous Uzbek poets, who became the victims of Stalin's purges (Bhattacharya, 2022 and Azimov, 2022).

[27] For more information on British-Russian competition over Central Asia please see Gillard, 2023.

enlightening and decolonial movement also originated not in Central Asia but in Crimea. Then their ideas were very actively developed in the Ottoman Empire, in the Caucasus, in the Volga region, and only then in Central Asia (in agreement with Bazarbayev, Gumadullayeva and Rustambekova, 2013). A similar situation occurred in the 1980s-1990s: the Volga region and Caucasus were very active in translating the ideas of independence, development of the national language, etc (in line with Shcherbak, 2015), while our region remained more reluctant (in line with Vujacic and Zaslavsky, 1991) and did it much later (in line with Kudaibergenova and Shin, 2018). These might be connected, firstly, to our geography, and secondly, to our historical experience. If we shared borders with Russia, like Kazakhstan, Georgia or Ukraine does, the development of these ideas might have been catalysed.

Thus, in order to develop a decolonial mind-set, it seems important to further the communication with countries that have a strong decolonising agenda to exchange thoughts, learn from them and start feeling guilty for the dismissive attitude to Uzbek language. Using Zembylas's (2022) framework as a three-step path to achieve decolonisation: 1) discomfort; 2) solidarity, and 3) constant practice of (1) and (2), it can be said that the connection with the outside world does allow going beyond step 1. The above-mentioned guilt is discomforting but because it is accompanied by the "desire to confess, apologize, or repair" (Teimouri, 2019:13), this apparently fosters solidarity. In turn, this makes it possible to take steps 2 and 3 of Zembylas's (2022) framework.

Although traveling is not always possible/affordable, today there are lots of opportunities to learn about decolonisation from online reading or meetings/forums generating/promoting decolonial ideas and/or challenging (post)colonial logic. The direct confirmation of this fact has not been found in existing literature, but the opposite argument seems valid. Finke (2017) says that even the fact that the increasing number

of Uzbek men goes to Russia to earn money[28] has a bearing on their families' identity development, which is unlikely to be decolonial.

7.7 My Own Story

Before concluding on the findings discussed so far in this chapter, I want to share my own story related to Uzbek language learning and decolonisation. I think this is logical given that in my research rationale I mentioned that I was interested in comparing others' experiences with mine. Although I have shared some of my experiences in Introduction, Methodology, and where relevant - throughout Chapters 6 and 7, I have not reflected deeply on my Uzbek learning journey in connection to language decolonisation. To do so, first, I will draw on my childhood experiences shaped by family, wider environment, school and neighbourhood. Second, I will share about my agentic endeavours to learn Uzbek and the related (post)colonial tensions. I will finish this subsection with the thoughts about where I am with regard to Zembylas's (2022) affective decolonisation theory.

Uzbek has always been present in my life, as I have been living in Uzbekistan for my entire life, and I am an ethnic Uzbek. Almost all of my relatives speak or spoke Uzbek. At the same time, Uzbek was underrepresented in my life, because everyone, including my parents, spoke Russian with me and my brothers, and that is how Russian became our L1, similarly to most of my research participants (see subsection 6.4). This happened because I was born in Soviet times when Russian was very important (Haarmann, 1992). Previously, understanding the importance of Russian language, my grandmother sent her only-Uzbek-speaking child, my father, to Russian-medium school, where he struggled a lot before he learnt Russian. However, he was very appreciative of this decision later, as Russian, indeed, opened many doors for him and allowed him to do a good career in science. When I was born, my father did not want

[28] Only in 2022 Uzbek labour migrants sent $14.5 billion from Russia to Uzbekistan (Ospanova et al., 2023).

me to struggle with Russian, so he chose Russian to be our main family language. Years later, I learned Uzbek, but we still continue speaking more Russian than Uzbek at home as my research participants described in the subsection 6.4, and hence demonstrate lack of so-called epistemic disobedience - “delinking from the web of imperial/modern knowledge and from the colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo, 2009a:178).

Uzbek language appeared in my school schedule, when I was in Grade 4, and Uzbekistan was already independent. It was a love at first sight and long-term success story, for which I am, similarly to my interviewees described in subsection 6.4, very thankful to my school and university Uzbek language teachers. I keep fond memories about my formal Uzbek language learning, as I always felt supported and encouraged to explore and create.

My environment was generally helpful too. I appreciate my father, who has never translated anything for me but instead would say: “The dictionary is on the shelf, get and find what you need.” This was very beneficial for me, as it improved my Uzbek. I am also grateful to other native Uzbek speakers for delicately correcting me, suggesting a better word choice, which was helpful too.

In 1993 my family moved from the mainly Russian-speaking centre of Tashkent to the Uzbek mahalla in the Tashkent periphery, where I and my brothers were not warmly accepted due to the lack of Uzbek skills. I remember being called “o‘ris” (“Russian”), “oq quloq” (“white ears”), “sariq” (“yellow”), and even being thrown with a stone for poor Uzbek and “non-Uzbek” appearance. All these are similar to how “whiteness *can* signal […] marginality rather than normativity, and disadvantage rather than privilege” (Moosavi, 2015:1930) and resonate well with Lee (2023), who argues that decolonisation often tends to fall into nationalism encouraging stereotypic identity. These all were sad, unpleasant and perhaps, aimed at shaming by making me regret my otherness (Teimouri, 2019), but I was not ashamed. In contrast, I was motivated to know what people were saying about me, and to respond in Uzbek, when necessary. I wanted to prove to everyone that I could learn Uzbek.

The years of studying Uzbek at school helped me a lot. Of course, much work has been done independently. Being driven by my ethnic origin, I listened, read and wrote in Uzbek a lot. I became interested in Uzbek language and history. Some pages of Uzbek-Russian history, such as Russian invasion, Soviet repressions, the disappearance of the Aral Sea[29], and even the most recent chauvinist proposal of one Russian politician about joining Uzbekistan to Russia (Kun.uz, 2023) saddened and discomforted me. Nonetheless, they did not make me aggressive anti-Russian.

Learning Uzbek brought me closer to my people, but I also realised that my Uzbek would never be as strong as my Russian. This bothered me for quite a while, but over the years I have almost reconciled my postcolonial tensions. First, despite how good my Uzbek is now, it did not seem to bring my people closer to me. I still see surprised faces when I, a person with non-Uzbek appearance, speak Uzbek. It usually takes about 10-15 minutes before Tashkent taxi drivers get enough evidence that they do not need to switch to Russian, when talking with me. Again, all these resonate with Lee (2023), who argues that decolonisation often tends to fall into nationalism encouraging stereotypic identity.

Second of all, I learned Uzbek through Russian, and in this sense, Russian did not prevent me from learning Uzbek. Additionally, often coming across functional illiteracy of native Uzbek speakers, their poor knowledge of Uzbek grammar and literature, I started regretting less and less about not having studied in an Uzbek-medium school. Zembylas (2022:15) calls it feeling discomfort “from the position of the privileged”, but the origin of this privilege is unusual, as it is the Russian imperial legacy that paradoxically helped me learn my ancestral language.

Moreover, having been brought up in the Russian language continuum did not deprive me of thinking about Uzbek. For example, when studying at school, I saw my ethnic Russian peers not willing to study Uzbek. However, at that time I could not be critical

[29] For more information on this please see Peterson, 2019.

of them, as they knew their ancestral tongue but I did not. And of course, then I could not connect these issues with colonialism. At the same time, I have never denied the historical fact that Russia colonised Central Asia, and consequently, Russian had an impact on the development, actual status and use of Uzbek. It is just that this impact was/is ambiguous. For instance, recently I found out that the specialists from Indiana University attempted to sort out the Uzbek grammar based on the language proficiency levels (Shin, 2024), which was said to be missing in post-Soviet teaching of Uzbek as L2 (Asanov, 2021c). However, a careful comparison of this recent development with the grammar content of the Soviet Uzbek language textbooks (e.g., Gromatovich, 1930) allows for the conclusion that a very similar layout existed in colonial times. Thus, at least grammar-wise, the imperial approach to teach Uzbek as L2 was not out-dated and hence, did not aim at associating Uzbek with underdevelopment, which is one of the important indicators of language coloniality-related injustice (Roche, 2019).

Contemplating where I am with regard to Zembylas's (2022) affective decolonisation theory, I can say that I partly meet the requirements of all stages. I feel discomfort, although from the position of the privileged. I experience solidarity with Uzbek people who, struggle to access information and find a well-paid job, knowing only Uzbek (Schweitzer, 2020), or who are shy to speak their dialect publicly (see subsection 7.3). I can also see the hidden colonial logic in Russian remaining a more preferred linguistic choice for gaining education through (Eraliev and Urinboyev, 2023), or in continuous use of the Uzbek Cyrillic script in Uzbekistan (Akhmedova et al., 2024). However, I also feel hard to talk about this coloniality, when learning Uzbek is not well supported in Uzbekistan, and many people experience injustices related to inequitable Uzbek language education, which was evident in Chapter 6. Additionally, there seems to be no mechanisms in place to allow dealing with white discomfort ethically, which is important (Zembylas, 2015). The recent interview with the rector of the Uzbek University of Journalism and Mass Communications, Qudratxo'ja, who told all Uzbekistanis, who cannot speak Uzbek, to decide whether they are occupiers or idiots (Daryo.uz, 2024) is a sad example of how shaming through aggressive nationalist rhetoric does not help improve the relationship between the former colonisers and colonised. Also, shame is known to demotivate SLA (Teimouri, 2019), as it has been

suggested in section 7.6. I am against aggression/confrontation and want to have a peaceful discussion in society preferably in the same language, for which logically the equitable language learning should be prioritised over its decolonisation in the current Uzbek context (in line with Zembylas in Barreiro et al., 2020). By saying so, I am not diminishing the importance of Uzbek language decolonisation, but I feel it will happen more likely after everyone in Uzbekistan has good conditions to learn Uzbek. This makes even more sense given that solving some problems such as the limited number of resources to learn Uzbek would address both equity and decolonisation issues.

7.8 Conclusion

In short, this section has discovered some factors that have a bearing on the Uzbek language learning-related emotional experiences, fostering or inhibiting the Uzbek language decolonisation. These factors have been shown to prevent or enable the development of a decolonial mind-set in relation to Uzbek language. This draws special attention to the fact that the capacity of individuals largely exposed to shame is insufficient to be accountable for noticing the hidden colonial logic in daily life and taking steps towards decolonisation. Conversely, this section has demonstrated how such factors as understanding Uzbek history accompanied by lack of decolonial pedagogies and parents' nostalgia for the colonial past, cannot help internalise decolonial discourse. This is aggravated by the continuous imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and cultural capitals, making Russian a more attractive choice for learning.

Speaking about imperial languages, Versteegh (2015:51) suggests that "once there is nothing interesting to gain from learning the language, people will stop learning the language." This is unlikely to happen to the Russian language in Uzbekistan in the nearest future. However, Versteegh's (2015:51) words seem quite true in relation to Uzbek language, which is not learnt due to the lack of modern upgrades it can bring at the moment. Considering this situation as a problem but not solely as a fault of the Uzbek people is important to understand their (post)colonial struggles.

Additionally, based on the mainly disadvantageous experiences of learning Uzbek as L2 (see Chapter 6), it has been suggested that maybe not decolonisation but social justice, namely equitable formal Uzbek language education should become a priority in the current Uzbek context. This is in line with Zembylas (in Barreiro et al., 2020) notion of context specific prioritisation of decolonisation over social justice or vice versa. Logically, equitable Uzbek language education will also reduce shame known as a demotivator of SLA (Teimouri, 2019). Moreover, it can increase the culpability[30], which has a positive impact on SLA (Ibid.), of those who were reluctant to learn Uzbek

[30] Arguing for the importance of shame and guilt in affective decolonization, it is equally important to consider the danger of inadvertently creating collective guilt and/or shame amongst those who are not fluent in Uzbek. Although these emotions are said to have such adverse consequences as falling into moralism (Freire, 1978), recentring the feelings of the privileged (Tuck and Yang, 2012), reproducing power (Ahmed, 2004) and avoiding actions and responsibility (Simon, 2005), for most of them shame is mentioned as the only reason, which is in line with Teimouri's (2019) understanding of the difference between shame and guilt. Given that how many of my research participants were/are ashamed for not knowing Uzbek, it can be also suggested that collective shame might have been already created, and, perhaps, that is why there is a lack of decolonial actions in contemporary Uzbek society. Thus, logically it would be essential to discontinue it. As for guilt, according to Teimouri (2019) it is supposed to sparkle corrective actions, and in this sense, guilt is beneficial, but must be navigated ethically and safely as required by pedagogies of discomfort (Zembylas, 2015). However, if guilt causes only cheap moral catharsis, it is worthless (Žižek, 2009). I think that in order to achieve the desired effect of guilt, it is crucial to have an inclusive, peaceful discussion in the Uzbek society, where everyone can share their well-argued concerns regarding Uzbek language learning and decolonisation, and without xenophobia and aggression move together towards their solution.

before much more socially just conditions are created, after which the Uzbek language decolonisation might become a more feasible task. Furthermore, addressing injustices related to inequitable Uzbek language education such as lack of modern resources to learn Uzbek will resolve the related decolonisation issues.

Given the number of factors identified in this chapter, which of them are the most relevant to address at the policy and practice levels, so Uzbek language acquisition can lead to the Uzbek language decolonisation? The interview data suggest that the strongest influence on Uzbek language decolonisation is exerted by traveling and broader communication that develops guilt for the dismissive behaviour in relation to Uzbek language. However, there is irony in the fact that these will be highly likely to occur through the imperial languages, which, in turn, raises the importance of developing decolonial discourse in Uzbekistan by initiating broader discussion in Uzbek society, creating the corresponding content in Uzbek and embedding decolonial pedagogies in Uzbek education.

Additionally, to decolonise Uzbek language, its education should become attractive and reflect modernity well, which will stop associating it with underdevelopment and awkwardness (Roche, 2019). This would mean to address not only the negative emotional experiences of learning Uzbek as L2, as shown in Chapter 6, but also to make it a high-resourced language with effective teaching methods and specialists. Hence, a good level of Uzbek language proficiency, deep understanding of Uzbek history, being an ethnic Uzbek, perception of self and Uzbek language today as (post)colonial, shifting linguistic and cultural balance towards Uzbek, and greater exposure to decolonial ideas through traveling, reading and broader communication seem to be particularly helpful for the Uzbek language decolonisation. Additionally, guilt was shown to foster, whereas shame was shown to inhibit both Uzbek language acquisition and Uzbek language decolonisation.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Summary of Main Research Findings

This thesis has answered the following research questions:

1) How do learners of Uzbek as L2 perceive and interpret their emotional experiences within the context of Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan?

2) What are the critical factors that shape these emotional experiences, and in what ways do they facilitate or obstruct the decolonisation of the Uzbek language?

Answering the first question, it can be said that different learners of Uzbek as L2 perceive and interpret their emotional experiences within the context of Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan as pride, gratitude, dissatisfaction, discouragement and shame.

According to my data, such emotional experiences as discouragement, insufficient challenge and shame within the context of Uzbek language education in Uzbekistan, discourage Uzbek language learning, whereas such emotions as guilt, pride and gratitude encourage it. Therefore, for the successful acquisition of Uzbek as L2 it is imperative to have both positive (pride and gratitude) and negative (guilt) emotional experiences, which is in accordance with Shao et al (2020). Interestingly, guilt contributes to improved SLA (Teimouri 2019) and discomfort (Boler and Zembylas, 2003), yet it was not a part of the Uzbek language learning experiences. However, some of my interviewees were insufficiently discomforted/challenged by the Uzbek language teaching (see subsection 6.3), and due to their disheartening language environment, failed to grasp the significance of learning Uzbek (see subsection 6.2). Additionally, some of them were embarrassed (see subsection 6.2) and ashamed (see subsection 6.4) due to limited Uzbek proficiency to show how unjust they were in relation to Uzbek. However, nothing supports that my research participants had “safe spaces in which students can process their discomfort productively” (Porto and Zembylas, 2022:329), given their sustained public humiliation.

Interestingly, succeeding and struggling to learn Uzbek does not seem to depend on the ethnic origin, as my ethnic Uzbek interviewees as well as my participants of other ethnic origin have shared both types of stories (see Chapter 6). Additionally, regardless of the ethnicity, most of those who succeeded put greater emphasis on why to learn Uzbek, whereas most of those who struggled talked more about how to learn Uzbek. However, belonging to a dominant ethnicity is known to increase the dominant language proficiency expectations, which makes the related humiliation and/or shame stronger than that of non-dominant nationals (Wang and Dovchin, 2022). This was confirmed by more emotional descriptions of the situations when my ethnic Uzbek participants were exposed to shame. Teimouri (2019) explains it well in terms of the shame-threatened global self, which obviously includes the aspect of ethnicity. Thus, following his logic, if a person is an ethnic Uzbek, his/her Uzbek ethnicity will be more threatened by shaming for not knowing Uzbek language than if a person is not, given the profound connection between language and ethnicity (Fishman, 2017). And the fact that there are some people of non-Uzbek ethnic origin, who know Uzbek better, may even add up strength to these emotions.

At the same time, it is very encouraging to see Uzbekistanis of non-titular ethnicities who use Uzbek so skilfully, who are grateful to know this language and do not give up learning it. Their presence allows for acknowledging some effectives mechanisms in Uzbek language education be it formal or informal that can sparkle individuals' long-lasting interest in Uzbek language. But perhaps, more importantly, their presence gives evidence of the improving attitudes to and the increasing power of Uzbek language in the contemporary Uzbekistan, although still a lot has to be done in this direction.

Answering the second question, it can be said that the critical factors that shape these emotional experiences are different. Pride is shaped by Uzbek ethnicity (an individual characteristic) and family (an informal environment/institution). The other four emotional experiences are products of mainly formal Uzbek language education (a formal environment/institution). Additionally, shame along with guilt, which was not revealed in the Uzbek educational context, are shaped by: a) ambiguous perspectives of Uzbek language proficiency (outcomes), b) understanding of Uzbek history (individual characteristics), c) imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and

cultural capitals (environments/institutions), d) (de)colonial tensions driven by ethnicity and self-perception (individual characteristics) and e) connection with the outside world (environments/institutions) (see Figure 8.1).

These factors inhibit or catalyse decolonial thinking in relation to Uzbek. Importantly, ashamed individuals seem less likely to feel decolonising solidarity. Such factors as understanding Uzbek history coupled with no decolonial pedagogies and parental wistfulness for the colonial past, cannot help adopt decolonial perspectives. This is compounded by the ongoing imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and cultural capitals, making Russian a better learning option.

In contrast, guilty individuals seem more likely to feel decolonising solidarity. My data suggest such factors as a good level of Uzbek language proficiency, deep understanding of Uzbek history, being an ethnic Uzbek, perception of self and Uzbek language today as (post)colonial, shifting linguistic and cultural balance towards Uzbek, and greater exposure to decolonial ideas through traveling, reading and broader communication seem to be particularly helpful for the Uzbek language decolonisation. This will be also facilitated by creating the corresponding content in Uzbek, embedding the pedagogies in Uzbek education, which are decolonial, attractive and reflect modernity well.

Thus, shame has been shown as a way to obstruct Uzbek language decolonisation by impeding decolonising solidarity. In contrast, guilt is a way to facilitate it by fostering decolonising solidarity. Given that, shame and guilt as constituents of white discomfort represent connection between Uzbek language acquisition and decolonisation (see Figure 8.1).

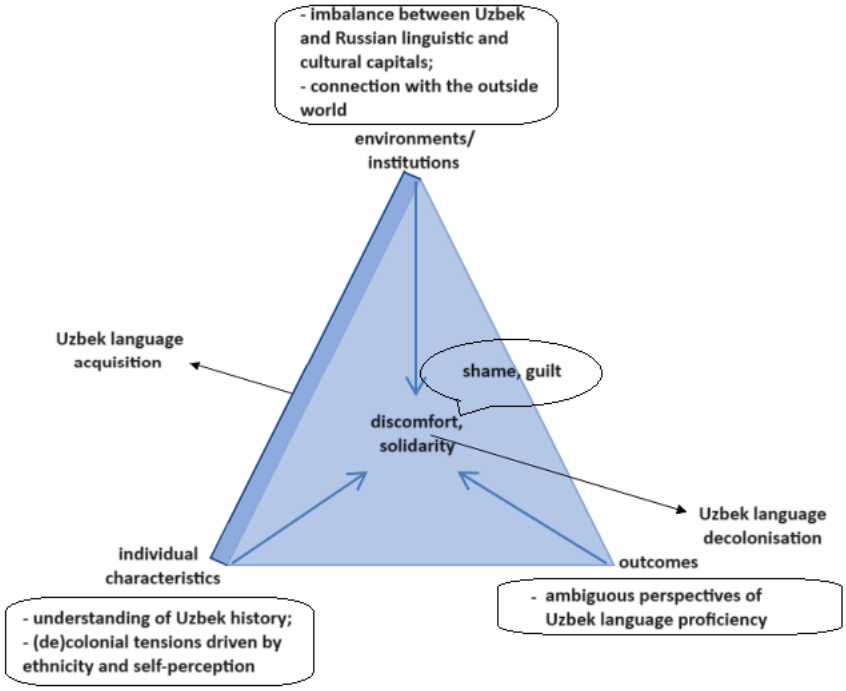

Figure 8.1. Specific factors shaping white discomfort (shame and guilt) and affecting the Uzbek language decolonisation

8.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This study may be the first of its kind in Uzbekistan, Central Asia and post-Soviet space to explore the link between SLA and affective decolonization. It contributes significantly to the body of empirical knowledge on the linguistic situation in the post-Soviet countries (e.g., Tyson, 2009; Tsurkan et al., 2020; Zhumashova et al., 2023; Liskovets, 2023; Smagulova, 2023; Tarasova, 2023) depicted before either solely in historical and socioeconomic terms or in the way that addresses emotions triggered only by the current war between Russia and Ukraine without an attempt to connect them theoretically to decolonisation. This study deepens our perception of the connection between SLA and affective decolonization in two ways. First, emotions, namely white discomfort, has been conceptualised as an overlapping area, connecting SLA and language decolonisation. The identification of five main emotional experiences (pride, gratitude, dissatisfaction, discouragement and shame) of learning Uzbek as L2 has allowed seeing that out of them only shame is a constituent of white discomfort.

Nonetheless, it facilitates neither SLA (Teimouri, 2019), nor language decolonisation, as I have shown in this study. Other emotional experiences such as dissatisfaction and discouragement have been also found to adversely affect Uzbek language acquisition, not to mention their zero contribution to Uzbek language decolonisation. All this can inform the actions of practitioners and policymakers, who want to deliver and develop more effective Uzbek language programmes, bearing in mind their emotional and decolonial contributions to learning. Some suggestions have been given to improve teaching practices (see subsection 8.4). Of course, supporting teachers in their journeys would be incomplete without involving parents, school administration, curriculum developers, personnel training service and the state/government that should collaborate with teachers, help them organise engaging learning for students, meet their professional needs and facilitate the development of a truly respectful attitude to Uzbek language.

Second, the identification of specific factors that shape white discomfort and affect Uzbek language decolonization contributes to the body of theoretical knowledge (e.g., DiAngelo, 2018; Zembylas, 2018; Zembylas, 2022). It has given a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages - individual and environmental - that Uzbek people can face when teaching and learning Uzbek and when contemplating the coloniality of their views. These specified factors therefore help better reckon why the Uzbek language decolonisation has not occurred as argued by Alimdjanov (2019). All the factors identified in the present thesis are summarised in Figure 8.1. They originated empirically from a specific context, so this research does not claim that they will be applicable somewhere else. Although more research is certainly needed to support my findings, Figure 8.1 could be a starting point for furthering the knowledge on aspects that can facilitate or impede Uzbek language acquisition (CABAR, 2020) and decolonisation (Asanov 2021a; Asanov, 2021b; Asanov 2021c). Additionally, by elaborating that shame coexists with imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and cultural capitals, and ambiguous perspectives of Uzbek language proficiency, it demonstrates that in the current Uzbek context the social justice agenda, namely the provision of equitable formal Uzbek language education can be prioritised over its decolonisation, which is in line with Barreiro et al (2020). Apparently, before expecting

decolonising solidarity from Uzbek people, it is significant that they all at least can learn Uzbek to be able to speak with each other in the same language. Today, Uzbekistan lacks a policy/state programme emphasising equitable Uzbek language education, and it is hoped that the results of this study can be instrumental for developing such a document.

In essence, using Shao et al's (2020) model of SLA and Zembylas's (2022) ideas on affective decolonisation has allowed gaining comprehensive, detailed and individual-oriented insights into the role of emotional experiences in Uzbek language education on Uzbek language decolonisation. These perceptions add to few studies (e.g., Kosmarskii, 2009; Schweitzer, 2020; Gorshenina, 2021), which have shown that unlike minoritised/Indigenous languages in postcolonial American, African, Asian and Oceanian states, where the formal imperial languages enjoy the status of (co)-official languages (see Chapter 2), Uzbek as a solely official postcolonial language of majority continues struggling to overcome Russian colonial influence. Specifically, my study has shown that a language does not have to be lost and/or unlearned as in the postcolonial American and Oceanian contexts (e.g., West-Newman, 2004; Ortiz, 2009; Yan and Saura, 2015; Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018; Martin et al., 2020; Guerrettaz, 2020; De Costa, 2021; Kroskrity and Meek, 2023; Guerrettaz and Engman, 2023; Ortega, 2023), untaught and/or unstandardised as in the postcolonial African contexts (e.g., Muhungi, 2011; Brock-Utne, 2014; Kiramba, 2014; Trudell et al., 2015; Agyekum, 2018; Gelles, 2018; Hantgan-Sonko, 2018; Pah, 2018; Khepera, 2020; Stroud and Kerfoot, 2021; Mabasa-Manganyi and Ntshangase, 2021; Maduagwu, 2021; Adamson, 2023; Eme and Uwaezuoke, 2023; Gibson and Wekundah, 2024) and have unequal rights as in the Asian and European contexts (e.g., Fjellgren and Huss, 2019; Gimeno-Monterde and Sorolla, 2022; Hammine, 2021; Mac Ionnrachtaigh, 2021; Morgounova Schwalbe, 2021; Phyak, 2021; Nakagawa and Kouritzin, 2021; Roche et al., 2023) in order to evoke (post)colonial sentiments of shame and guilt and the corresponding actions. Moreover, it addresses well the previously identified lack of the Global South perspectives (Selvi, 2024), the scarcity of research on SLA and emotions in non-Western classrooms and other learning settings (Driver and Prada, 2024), and

the shortage of intersectionality research, linking identity characteristics (e.g., ethnicity) with language decolonisation and SLA (Norton and De Costa, 2018).

My study also challenges the neoliberal notion of Uzbek language as a poor choice for education due to purely economic reasons (e.g., Dietrich, 2011) by demonstrating the role of emotional experiences in SLA. Additionally, in contrast to the body of research on developing L2 skills in the titular languages of other post-Soviet countries (e.g., Tsurkan et al., 2020; Zhumashova et al., 2023), this study suggests that not only foreigners, but the representatives of titular ethnicities struggle to develop such proficiencies. In this regard, applying the lens of Shao et al's (2020) model has been beneficial since it better explains the factors such as ethnic origin, formal and informal learning settings, attainment and agentic efforts, which fostered or impeded people's emotional attachment to Uzbek. In turn, considering it through the lens of Zembylas's (2022) affective decolonisation lens allowed revealing what is behind this emotional attachment and whether it can lead to decolonisation. Given that current Uzbek language education does not facilitate Uzbek language decolonisation, it is vital to implement the decolonising pedagogies (Zembylas, 2022) and the pedagogies of discomfort (Boler, 1999) as well as to broaden the opportunities for connecting with the outside world, which has been found in this study. All these have been shown to help embrace decolonisation, and hence should be reflected in the educational policies.

Furthermore, this research adds to the existing theoretical knowledge. Specifically, this study contributed to a more nuanced understanding of Zembylas's (2022) idea of decolonising solidarity by pointing at the importance of 'solidarity within/among'. This is worth bearing in mind when dealing with decolonising the state languages of majority in the post-Soviet context and beyond. This conceptualisation of decolonising solidarity can also help plan actions to address the accompanying injustices through decolonising pedagogies. Another theoretical contribution of this thesis is to show the advantage of merging Shao et al's (2020) SLA model and Zembylas's (2022) conceptualisation of affective decolonisation, when studying issues related to emotional experiences of learning a postcolonial state language as L2. This has been useful for addressing concerns that Zembylas (2022) considers affective

decolonisation only in the context of higher education, and that white discomfort can discourage agency (see Chapter 4).

8.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study holds some limitations related to its nature and methodological aspects. Firstly, it is a small–scale qualitative nature of my research, which does not allow for generalisation. Hence, more research in this field is needed to support my findings.

Secondly, it is that I introduced myself to my research participants as a PhD student from Lancaster University, which might be viewed as outsiderness, and therefore, might distance participants from me. Additionally, being a western university student might have played a negative role in recruiting interviewees, who might have been sceptical about the ability of my study to affect the solution of the long-lasting problems of Uzbek language and its education, especially given that my work would be published in English. As a researcher, I hope to address this concern by publishing at least a part of my work in Uzbek and Russian later, so more people can access the results of my research[31].

[31] I think that publishing at least a part of my work in Uzbek is imperative to initiate discussion about decolonisation in the Uzbek society, for most of which, especially for the non-experts, it will make more sense if the message goes in Uzbek. Additionally, this will contribute to the development of corresponding content in Uzbek, which will also address both social justice and decolonisation implications related to epistemicide and underdevelopment (Roche, 2019). At same time, it is important to understand that in order for this discussion to go to the local scientific circles and perhaps even reach the regional (Central Asia or post-Soviet space) level, it is important to have some publications in Russian. The publications in both languages but especially in Russian due to its potentially wider audience should be a well-thought act, which involves delicate balance and strong argumentation, the avoidance of overgeneralisation and excessive accusations. When preparing my publications, I will take

Thirdly, it is my sampling, which contains mostly the research participants who have studied or have been working in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan. Although this fact implies that my sample does not represent the whole country, it is worth keeping in mind that the education through Russian in post-Soviet Uzbekistan and especially now is mostly available in Tashkent. Hence, this fact does not much affect the validity of the data collected.

Finally, it is that Uzbek language proficiency in case of all my interviewees is a self-ranked parameter and hence, lacks precision due to no standardised system to assess Uzbek language skills. In this sense, such imprecision could affect grouping my research participants under certain narratives. At the same time, this is a valuable insight for my research, which shows that Uzbek needs further development to overcome its low-resourcefulness as a result of Russian colonialism.

This research has shown the potential of using the elements of the SLA and affective decolonisation to study the relationship between Uzbek language learning, decolonisation and emotions, and calls for more exploration of this relationship using the theoretical underpinnings of this study in different contexts. This would assist in creating a more nuanced vision of the contribution that SLA can make to language decolonisation in different locations at the micro-level, and would add to the research in frontiers of language and decolonisation at the macro-level. Given the linguistic awakening in the post-Soviet space provoked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, more research from this part of the world would be especially welcome. My research has also demonstrated the importance of viewing language acquisition and decolonisation as evolving from feelings of discomfort: guilt rather than shame. Therefore, future decolonisation research might investigate other possible ways of these emotions' production and interconversion as well as the related social justice

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care not to implicitly or accidentally promote nationalist or nativist positions. My purpose it to have a constructive dialogue, which will hopefully help consolidate all Uzbekistanis around Uzbek language.

implications, which would be extremely beneficial to second/heritage language teachers and students.

8.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been summarised from those given by Uzbek language learners and teachers in order to improve the attitude to and the practice of teaching and learning Uzbek as L2:

1. The state policy/programme/support is needed to motivate teachers and learners of Uzbek as L2 to fulfil their obligations well.
2. The existing Uzbek language policy, including the transition to Latin-based Uzbek script should not be violated.
3. Teachers of Uzbek as L2 should be trained, paid and accommodated adequately to implement decolonising pedagogies, to deliver interesting, engaging and differentiated lessons emphasising language practice rather than theory.
4. Substantiated research should be done to clearly distinguish between different levels of Uzbek proficiency and to develop the assessment techniques on this basis.
5. More content (audio, video, literature) should be created in Uzbek to increase its importance and facilitate language learning.
6. Parental involvement is a key to develop an appropriate attitude towards the language and its acquisition; thus, schools should collaborate with families and vice versa.
7. Greater national self-consciousness and respect for the national language needs to be developed by Uzbek society in order to create a welcoming and motivating environment for learning Uzbek.
8. Uzbek language reflects the culture and history of its speakers thus should be taught through the immersion into Uzbek culture and history, which helps develop the corresponding linguistic skills and raise the national self-consciousness.

These recommendations will allow addressing the injustices related to inequitable Uzbek language education. Some of them (3-5) will also help promote Uzbek language decolonisation, as they will address the issue of epistemicide, awkwardness and underdevelopment (Roche, 2019). Additionally, given the role of independent learning and the connection with the outside world for language learning and decolonisation, it can be suggested to embed into practice thought-provoking reading and sharing activities, participation in different online and face-to-face events and study programmes to gain/exchange knowledge on decolonisation.

It is also significant to underline the importance of joint efforts, which will help promote Uzbek and engage with it in a more balanced and multi-levelled way aligned with decolonial principals. It has been shown that empty patriotic talks as well as aggressive nationalist messages calling for the mandatory use of Uzbek and punitive actions for doing otherwise have not caused anything but shame and resistance. Instead, it is crucial to delimit access to and create more resources in Uzbek language, which will result in a greater prestige of Uzbek. This can be achieved by addressing the issues related to "[language] planning, status, acquisition, domain expansion, teaching materials, and literary production" (Roche, 2019:4), which are impossible without the appropriate governmental support. Additionally, it is very important that the Uzbek government supports research in and about Uzbek language, invests in digitising and technologising the Uzbek language and puts continuous efforts into improving the socioeconomic situation in the country (in agreement with Helm et al., 2023), as its increasingly attractive image will inevitably cause the attraction to Uzbek.

Along with the Uzbek government, different educational settings should contribute to decolonisation and improved acquisition of Uzbek language. This, first of all, should include a strong parental support of the state language, for which families should be equipped with necessary literacy resources and be encouraged to use them (in agreement with Forey, Besser and Sampson, 2016). In addition to this, cultivating respect to Uzbek and other languages, not only speaking Uzbek but speaking about Uzbek at home should be welcome. The intergenerational conversations about the emotions related to the Uzbek language learning, prohibition and/or revival should not be hesitated (in agreement with Mc Carty et al., 2018). Moreover, families are known

to play a huge role in cultural socialisation of their children, which could be strengthened not only through participating in the familial events but also through e.g., attending theatre performances, concerts, poetry evenings held in Uzbek or perhaps, even making public speeches in Uzbek (in line with García, 2020).

However, it is not only informal but also formal educational settings that influence children's language development. This study has identified some big problems in the field of Uzbek language, which cannot be solved without the active involvement of schools. Some important transformative changes should be made in the current state curriculum and pedagogies of Uzbek language as L2. My research participants suggested to emphasise the language application rather than theory (in line with Vallejo, 2019), making Uzbek lessons more interesting by linking the language with rich Uzbek history and culture. The curriculum developers would be also advised to avail some space in the programme, allowing the conversations on resilience and linguistic trauma (in line with Zembylas, 2007), in which Uzbek language teachers should be well trained. The teachers would also need not only to be familiar with decolonial theory and effective teaching strategies, but to reflect on their internalised values, attitudes and approaches that might still reproduce coloniality (in line with Molina, 2022).

As for the emotional aspects of Uzbek language education it can be suggested that teachers should be aware of pedagogies of discomfort and decolonising pedagogies and be able to apply them skilfully. The latter also means that teachers should know how to handle discomfort ethically, without shaming. This is very important given that the SLA research (Teimouri, 2019) and my thesis suggest that shaming fosters neither language learning nor language decolonisation.

It might seem at the moment that pedagogies of discomfort suggested to be implemented by Uzbek language teachers are somewhat abstract in their application. That is why it is important to reflect on how they would work in practice. According to Boler (1999) and Zembylas (2022), they should be:

- creative (which can be achieved e.g., through the incorporation of visual arts or other unconventional approaches into Uzbek lessons);
- transitive (which can be achieved by Uzbek language teachers through encouraging the desire to act differently, e.g., by not mixing Russian with Uzbek when speaking, as much as possible);
- and relational (which can be achieved e.g., through reading a text about the situation with Uzbek language in Soviet time and relating to its author's feelings)[32].

It will be logical to add that learning materials should be age-appropriate and suit the Uzbek language proficiency levels of learners. At times there might be a need to conduct in-class discussions in students' L1 (Russian) to ensure better clarity, which should not be hesitated. The use of Russian in Uzbek language lessons might actually be quite beneficial in terms of revealing hidden coloniality in different aspects of Uzbek language (e.g., stress, pronunciation, orthography, loan words and calques) by comparing concrete examples from both languages. Thus, there can be understood and admitted as limitation that Uzbek as it is currently taught is to some extent reproducing a Russian-codified version of the language.

8.5 Final Reflections

I began my research with little hope to find non-specialist, ordinary Uzbek people that would sincerely care about their Uzbek language proficiency, mainly because of the dismissive attitude towards Uzbek in the places where I have worked and studied. However, I was fortunate to meet not only those who are not indifferent to their ancestral tongue, but also those, who are able to talk about decolonisation as of their personal experiences. In connection to this I have to say that although the critical discourse around the position of Uzbek in Uzbekistan, except perhaps in some activist circles, is largely absent, my research has shown its emergence or at least has given

[32] See Appendix D for a lesson plan example.

an opportunity for different people to voice their concerns regarding Uzbek language. The emergence of this discourse at the grassroots level is accompanied by the growing understanding of wider presence of Uzbek language in the country and the growing need in learning this language acknowledged by some of my research participants. All these along with the recently intensified governmental efforts to strengthen the status and prestige of Uzbek language make me optimistic about the decolonial future of Uzbek language in Uzbekistan.

Additionally, I have become cognisant of the ways in which formal and informal Uzbek language education can disadvantage learners, and in the future, I aim to raise attention to this problem. I have also understood the importance of well balanced, well-argued talk about decolonisation without excessive blaming, which was especially appreciated by ethnic Russians I interviewed. I think this is one of the key takeaways, which can help spread decolonisation ideas without aggression and confrontation.

Appendix A: Themes and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-themes
Emotional experiences of learning Uzbek as L2	• Discouraged but not guilty • Proud but not sufficiently challenged • Feeling shame • Grateful
Factors tied with the emotional experiences and affecting Uzbek language decolonisation	• Imbalance between Uzbek and Russian linguistic and cultural capitals • Ambiguous perspectives of Uzbek language proficiency • Postcolonial tensions driven by ethnicity and self-perception • Understanding of Uzbek history • . Connection with the outside world

Appendix B: Participant information sheet (PIS)

Title: Exploring the emotional dimension of Uzbek language decolonisation: insights from the experiences of learning Uzbek as a state language

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage: www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about exploring the emotional dimension of Uzbek language decolonisation: insights from the experiences of learning Uzbek as a state language.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

This study aims to explore the emotional aspects of Uzbek language decolonisation, using the insights from the experiences of teaching and learning Uzbek as a state language.

Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because I am interested in understanding people's experiences of teaching and learning Uzbek at school/university as a postcolonial state language and why they associate their experiences with (un)successful Uzbek language acquisition/teaching. I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decided to take part, this would involve answering the interview questions regarding your experience of learning and teaching Uzbek as a postcolonial state language. This will take about 30-60 min.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study will allow you to share your experiences of learning and teaching Uzbek as a postcolonial state language.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time during your participation in this study. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and I will extract any ideas or information (=data) you contributed to the study and destroy them. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. Therefore, you can only withdraw up to 4 weeks after taking part in the study. After the 4-week cooling off period, you will not be able to withdraw your data.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. However, taking part will mean investing 30-60 minutes for an interview.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interview, only I, the researcher conducting this study will have access to the ideas you share with me. I will keep all personal information about you (e.g. your name and other information about you that can identify you) confidential, that is I will not share it with others. I will remove any personal information from the written record of your contribution. All reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use the information you have shared with me only in the following ways:

I will use it for research purposes and my PhD thesis only but might be using later for publications and conferences as well.

When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with you), so that although I will use your exact words, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect your anonymity in our publications.

How my data will be stored

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers. I will store hard copies of any data

securely in locked cabinets in my office. I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic). In accordance with University guidelines, I will keep the data securely for 10 years. Within these 10 years your data might be used for publication(s) or conferences.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself (k.tilyabaev@lancaster.ac.uk, my supervisor is Dr Melis Cin, m.cin@lancaster.ac.uk).

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact: Prof. Paul Ashwin, paul.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Appendix C: Consent form

Project Title: Exploring the emotional dimension of Uzbek language decolonisation: insights from the experiences of learning Uzbek as a state language

Name of Researcher: Kamil Tilyabaev

Email: k.tilyabaev@lancaster.ac.uk

Please tick each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within 4 weeks after I took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within **4 weeks** of taking part in the study my data will be removed. However, after the 4-week cooling off period, I will not be able to withdraw my data.	☐
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	☐
4. I understand that if I choose to participate in the online interview, it is hard for a researcher to fully guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of our conversation due to being unable to control them on my end, unless I make sure it is conducted in a quiet space without interruptions in my environment.	☐
5. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent.	☐
6. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	☐
7. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	☐
8. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____

Date _____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University

Appendix D: Lesson plan example

Lesson theme:	**“Mening tig‘ tilgan tilim”: Language as a wound and responsibility (can be held with Grade 9-11 students learning Uzbek as L2 in Russian-medium schools)**
Aim:	To contemplate the linguistic subordination of Uzbek to Russian through Halima Xudoyberdiyeva’s poetry, to generate students’ emotional reaction, critical thinking and responsibility for their mother/state language.
Learning objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will: • Understand and interpret the poem metaphors; • Discuss the manifestations of linguistic subordination in their lives/environments; • Relate their personal experiences to the poet’s feelings; • Express their own attitude to the status of Uzbek language; • Suggest small real steps to support Uzbek language in daily life.

Introduction: *"A language is..."* (10 min)	**Activity:** The following sentence starter is on the board: "Til - bu…" (A language is...) Students one after another complete this sentence with one word. For example: "Til – bu aloqa" (Language is a connection), "xotira" (memory), "ko'prik" (bridge), "ildiz" (roots), "qurol" (weapon), "uyat" (shame), "g'urur" (pride) etc. *The purpose is* to set the tone for the lesson, to show that language is not neutral, it is deeply personal and political.
Working with the poem: *"Mening tig' tilgan tilim"* (20 min)	**Step 1:** Teacher reads the poem expressively twice out loud. **Step 2:** Students receive the poem handouts, read it quietly and underline unclear/strong words and verses. **Step 3:** Students discuss in pairs: • What did I feel when I listened to this poem? • Which lines were the most touching? Why? • What does it say about language? About the young generation? About pain?

Reflection: ***Linguistic subordination*** **(15 min)**	**Lecturette + dialogue:** Teacher explains softly and without accusations that: • Uzbek language has been long subordinated to Russian in education, mass-media and official communication. • This deprived Uzbek of a status of “a language of the future”. • Many young people are ashamed to speak Uzbek and do not think it is prestigious. **Questions to the class:** • Have you seen such examples in your life? • In your opinion, why do not kids today always understand the language of parents/grandparents? • Have you ever felt that one language is “more important” than another?
Empathy and relation to self (15 min)	**Task: "Mening tilim — mening mas’uliyatim" (My language is my responsibility)** Students compose **a short letter on behalf of the poet** to their generation:

	“Bolajonim... tilingdan xavotirdaman, chunki...” (Oh, my child… I am worrying about your language, because…) Then, they **respond to this letter**: *“Halima opa, men Sizni tushundim. Endi men...” (I understood you, Halima opa. Now I…)* **The purpose is** to generate the feeling of solidarity, not shame. Students see themselves not as “victims” but as those who are responsible for their language.
Conclusion: *“Til — bu jonlilik”* (Language is being alive) (10 min)	• **Discussion:** • What will be my takeaway from this lesson? • What can I do today, so my attitude and approach to Uzbek language change? Teacher’s examples: • Try speaking Uzbek at home. • Do not hesitate your accent. • Read short texts or watch videos in Uzbek. • Ask your grandmother about archaisms.

	• Discuss the meanings of unclear words.
Homework (optional):	Write five sentences in Uzbek, using words or collocations that seem to be outdated but still important to you. Explain your choice.
Teacher's position:	"I am not expecting you to have already known the language. I would like you to feel it. Language is not only about grammar. Language is who we are."

Poem	
Original Uzbek text[33]	**English translation[34]**
Mening tig' tilgan tilim, Mening kesilgan tilim, Bahaybat to'g'on tushib, Yo'li to'silgan tilim. Qushning unut patiday, To'kilgan unut jonim. Kitoblarning qatida, Rangi-ro'yi somonim. "Eski o'zbek tili"mas,	My native tongue, you've been cut off. You have been spear-torn. Enormous hurdles blocked your way, and you've been left forlorn. You have been dropped insensibly as if a feather fell. It hurts when I observe you locked in your old paper cell. They switched to calling you just "old."

[33] Xudoyberdiyeva, H., (n.d.).

[34] My translation.

Dedilar eskirgan til,	No matter when and how.
Qo‘rqib chiqarmoqqa sas,	You are afraid to raise your voice
Sandiqlarga kirgan til.	and kept in hope chests now.
Senda bodom isi bor,	You smell like blooming almond trees.
Senda bobom isi bor,	You keep my grandpa’s breath.
Bolam na rus, na o‘zbek,	My kids are neither Russians nor true
Arosat belgisi bor.	Uzbeks.
Besh yuz yillar avvalgi,	What a mess!
Xatni men anglayman, bas,	I understand what was composed
Men bugun aytganimni,	five centuries ago.
Bolam ba’zan tushunmas.	My kids don't understand at times
Ko‘kragimda dod qotgan,	today what I say though.
Yaqinlashar katta xavf,	My heart still suffers from the pain.
O‘z tilini yo‘qotgan,	It feels the threat, it's near.
Xalq bo‘lmasmi yerdan daf.	If nations lose their mother tongues,
Oldga, safarbarlikka,	one day they'll disappear.
Qanday yaraydi bolam.	How will my kids prepare for life?
Ortidagi jarlikka,	Won't they be weak or blind?
Qanday qaraydi bolam.	Will they not fall into the pit
Uni kim qilib qo‘ydim?	that they have right behind?
Kim bo‘ldi og‘am-inim?	What have I done to my poor kids?
Tomir-tomirim kuydi,	Who are my kin today?
Sindi bo‘g‘in-bo‘g‘inim.	My roots were burned,
Guli unut xalq bo‘ldik,	

Yo‘li unut xalq bo‘ldik, Ommaviy gunglik sodir, Tili unut xalq bo‘ldik. Umrimning shom, kechiga, Shu o‘y sanchilib turib. “Lug‘atit-turk” ichiga, Yoshim tomchilab turib. Dedim: - Tig‘ tilgan tilim, Mening kesilgan tilim.	and my blood bonds were broken anyway. We have forgotten where to go and how to come along. We have become the nation that forgot its native tongue. Now that my end is near, I do this painful mental work. My tears are rolling down on “Diwan Lughat al-Turk.”[35] My dear native tongue, you’ve been so savagely spear-torn. You’ve been cut off to give no chance for you to be reborn.

[35] Written by Mahmud Qashg‘ariy in 11th century, this work is the first comprehensive dictionary of Turkic languages.

List of abbreviations

CABAR	Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
L1	First Language, Native Language, Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
USSR	the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UzSSR	Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic

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