

GERONTOLINGUISTICS ON A GLOBAL SCALE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Qurbonova Kamola Abdurahmonovna

Student of the Faculty of Philology of Namangan State University

Annotation

This article provides information about scientific activities carried out in foreign countries in the field of gerontolinguistics, which combines the disciplines of gerontology and linguistics, and discusses their significance. Indeed, a significant number of scholars have conducted substantial research in this field in countries such as Türkiye, China, Japan, Ukraine, and the United States from the late 20th century to the early 21st century.

Key words

gerontolinguistics, gerontology, linguistics, gerontology center, aging process, systemic functional theory, Alzheimer's disease, educational gerontology.

Annotatsiya

Hozirgi kunda gerontologiya va tilshunoslik fanlarini birlashtirgan soha bo'lmish gerontolingvistika bo'yicha bir nechta davlatlarda ilmiy izlanish ishlari olib borilmoqda. Ushbu maqolada bu bo'yicha chet davlatlarda amalga oshirilayotgan ilmiy faoliyatlar, ularning ahamiyati va sohaning taraqqiyot xususiyatlari haqida ma'lumotlar beriladi. Zero, bu soha bo'yicha ko'plab olimlar tomonidan Turkiya, Xitoy, Yaponiya, Ukraina, AQSh kabi davlatlarda XX oxiri-XXI asr boshlarida sezilarli darajadagi ilmiy ishlar olib borilmoqda.

Kalit so'zlar

gerontolingvistika, gerontologiya, tilshunoslik, gerontologiya markazi, keksayish jarayoni, tizimli funksional nazariya, altsgeymer kasalligi, ta'limiy gerontologiya.

Аннотация

В данной статье представлена информация о научной деятельности, осуществляемой в зарубежных странах в области геронтолингвистики – области, объединяющей геронтологию и лингвистику, а также рассматривается её значение. Действительно, значительное количество ученых проводило серьёзные исследования в этой области в таких странах, как Турция, Китай, Япония, Украина и Соединённые Штаты, с конца XX до начала XXI века.

Ключевые слова

геронтолингвистика, геронтология, лингвистика, центр геронтологии, процесс старения, системно-функциональная теория, болезнь Альцгеймера, образовательная геронтология.

INTRODUCTION

As is well known, human beings are social entities and throughout their lives they constantly need communication. Therefore, language is essential and indispensable for social life. Over the years, a person's physical condition undergoes changes, and this period may also affect their ability to use language. In particular, the aging process influences language processing and speech production. In this regard, a new field of study known as gerontolinguistics has emerged. Gerontolinguistics has developed at the intersection of gerontology and linguistics.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

Gerontology studies the social, cultural, psychological, cognitive, and biological aspects of aging. This term was first used in 1903 by Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov and is derived from the Greek words *geron* – “old person” and *logia* – “the study of”¹. The first attempts to study the problem of aging scientifically date back to the late 19th century. At that time, research was primarily conducted from the perspective of biology and medicine. Later, in the early 1990s, a series of sociolinguistic studies were conducted in nursing homes to examine the social aspects of language and aging. Consequently, the concept of “gerontolinguistics” emerged as a scientific field dedicated to studying the relationship between aging and language. This term was first used by the German linguist H. P. Lütjen in 1978².

In subsequent years, several researchers contributed to the development of this field. For example, in 1997, S. Makoni published an article titled “Gerontolinguistics in South Africa”³. Later, together with K. Greinjer, he co-authored an article titled “Comparative Gerontolinguistics”⁴, which analyzed the characteristics of communication with elderly people in nursing homes. Chinese scholars Z. Yan and G. Yin authored “Gerontolinguistics and Its Prospect in the Health Care Industry in Shandong”⁵, while L. Huang and Q. Zhu published “Pragmatic Studies in Gerontolinguistics: Perspectives, Methods, and Topics”⁶.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although this field is relatively new and began to take shape in the late nineteenth century, extensive research has been conducted by scholars. Studies in this area are carried out using different approaches across various countries. Indeed, such research is particularly widespread in countries with large populations and increasing life expectancy. One such country is Türkiye.

In Türkiye, the field of gerontology and its diverse interdisciplinary branches has been systematically studied for many years, reflecting the country’s growing attention to aging and age-related social challenges. Early academic and institutional efforts laid the foundation for the development of gerontological research, education, and practical applications. A significant milestone in this process was reached on October 25, 2013, with the establishment of the first Gerontology Center at Akdeniz University. This center played an important role in promoting scientific research, academic training, and social initiatives related to aging, thereby contributing to the institutionalization of gerontology in Türkiye.

As the scope of gerontological studies expanded, specialized care institutions also began to emerge. In 2016, the “Mavi Ev” Alzheimer’s Center was founded in Antalya as an innovative model for supporting elderly individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. The center provides comprehensive medical, psychological, and social assistance, while also facilitating effective communication between patients and their family members⁷. Such initiatives aim not

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerontology>

² Пашина Л.А. Конституирование геронтолингвистической парадигмы знания и ее современные перспективы // Вестник Томского государственного университета Философия. Социология. Политология. 2021. № 59 – С.106

³ Makoni S.B. Gerontolinguistics in South Africa // International journal of applied linguistics. 1997. Vol. 7, № 1. P. 57–65.

⁴ Makoni S, Grainger K. Comparative Gerontolinguistics: characterizing discourses in caring institutions in South Africa and the United Kingdom // Journal of Social Issues. 2002. Vol. 58, № 4. P. 805–824.

⁵ Yan Z., Yin G. Gerontolinguistics and Its Prospect in the Health Care Industry in Shandong // US-China Education Review. 2020. Vol. 10, № 2. P. 79–88.

⁶ Huang L., Zhu Q. Pragmatic Studies in Gerontolinguistics: Perspectives, Methods and Topics // Journal of East China Normal University. Philosophy, 2019. Vol. 51, № 6. P. 129–137.

⁷ Ayan F.S. Three Decades of Gerontology in Türkiye: Historical Foundations, Multidisciplinary Growth, and Future Horizons // Journal of Aging and long-term care, 2024, 7(3) – P.157



only to improve the quality of life of elderly individuals but also to raise public awareness of neurodegenerative diseases associated with aging. In parallel with these practical developments, higher education institutions in Türkiye took significant steps to strengthen academic research in gerontology. In 2014, a Department of Gerontology was established within the Faculty of Health Sciences at Biruni University with the aim of expanding scientific inquiry and professional training in this field. Following this initiative, Istanbul University introduced gerontology as a field of study in 2015, further reinforcing the academic infrastructure of gerontological education and research.

Since 2020, gerontologists have also begun to actively contribute to public policy and social services by working within the Ministry of Family, Labour, and Social Services⁸. Through their involvement, the systematic and comprehensive study of the aging process, as well as the development of support mechanisms for individuals affected by age-related challenges, has received political recognition and institutional backing. These developments demonstrate that gerontology in Türkiye has evolved from a primarily academic discipline into a socially and politically supported field with practical implications for improving the well-being of the aging population.

Scientific research on the aging process in China is also noteworthy. Over the past forty years, life expectancy in China has increased by nearly ten years, with women generally living longer than men. Chinese perspectives on gerontolinguistics are largely informed by research conducted in Western countries. While S. Makoni defines gerontolinguistics as the field that studies the speech of elderly individuals, one of the leading Chinese scholars in this field, Xuon Lihe, expands this definition by considering gerontolinguistics as the study of the processes of speech deterioration and loss in older adults⁹.

Chinese researchers such as Gu Yuego, Xuon Lihe, and Xingren Xu have been investigating this field as an independent scientific discipline, considering it a practical area that intersects with ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. For example, in 2008, Xingren Xu conducted a doctoral dissertation titled “Exploring the Impact of Aging through Transitivity”¹⁰, in which he applied the concept of transitivity within the framework of Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) to analyze how age influences stories told by elderly Chinese participants based on visual prompts. This work illustrates how Chinese scholars are systematically studying the effects of aging on language, combining theoretical rigor with practical analysis.

In Japan, significant scientific research in the field of gerontology is also being conducted. Academic programs in this area are offered at Oberlin University and the University of Tokyo. In 2006, the University of Tokyo established a Gerontology Research Division, and by 2008, it had launched an interdisciplinary educational program in gerontology¹¹. These initiatives facilitate the study of gerontology’s connections with other disciplines, including its relationship with linguistics.

Additionally, in 1954, under the leadership of S. Watanabe, the Japan Gerontological Association was founded in Tokyo. The activities of this association focused on investigating key issues related to aging and life expectancy. By the end of 1955, the association had

⁸ Ayan F.S. Three Decades of Gerontology in Türkiye: Historical Foundations, Multidisciplinary Growth, and Future Horizons // *Journal of Aging and long-term care*, 2024, 7(3) – P.158

⁹ Го Л, Сюй Ц. Становление геронтолингвистики: взгляд из Китая// *Russian Linguistic Bulletin*, 2 (30) Июнь – С.2 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2022.30.29>

¹⁰ Xingren Xu. Exploring the impact of aging through transitivity: A Systemic Functional approach to Chinese elders’ narratives – The Pennsylvania State University, 2008. 167 p.

¹¹ Tsukada N, Maeda N, Iijima K. Expanding educational opportunities in gerontology in Japan//*Innovation in Aging* 2023, Vol. 7, No. S1



organized twelve meetings addressing various gerontology-related topics. In 1956, the publication of the Annual Reports of the Japan Gerontological Association began¹². Through these efforts, the aim was to prevent or mitigate the biological, cognitive, social, and psychological challenges faced by individuals during old age and to improve overall life expectancy. During general meetings, specialists discussed these problems in detail and sought practical solutions to address them.

In Ukraine, the educational branch of gerontology has been particularly well developed¹³. This field emphasizes the study of the specific developmental, cognitive, social, linguistic, and emotional aspects of aging. It focuses on understanding the aging process in order to enhance the educational experiences of elderly individuals and views language as a crucial tool for learning. Indeed, in Ukraine, there is a growing interest among older adults in engaging in scientific and academic activities. Through gerontology, the challenges and risks associated with aging can be systematically addressed, providing older individuals with opportunities for continued learning, cognitive stimulation, and social participation.

In the United States, issues related to aging have been discussed since the 1920s. By the 1930s, scientific organizations and academic journals dedicated to this field began to emerge. For instance, the University of Southern California established a faculty of gerontology, which studies aging from the perspective of lifelong development¹⁴. Several researchers at the University of Southern California are actively engaged in gerontological studies. For example, Gerald C. Davison developed the “Think Aloud” technique to study cognitive-emotional processes that arise in stressful and complex social interactions, and he has been conducting research using this method for over thirty years. Bob Knight investigates the stress experienced by caregivers of patients with dementia and examines adaptive strategies based on cultural differences. Elizabeth Zelinski studies cognitive changes in older adults, focusing on memory, language comprehension, and related processes. These contributions highlight the United States’ comprehensive approach to understanding aging, integrating cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions, and applying these insights to improve both research and practical interventions for the elderly population.

In our country, scientific research in the field of gerontolinguistics has not yet developed to a significant extent. This may be due to certain social and cultural factors. Nevertheless, conducting studies in this area in the future would be highly beneficial for society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the field of gerontolinguistics is being studied in different countries through diverse approaches. Currently, countries with growing populations and a significant proportion of elderly individuals are at the forefront of scientific research in this field. In all of these countries, a primary objective is to prevent or mitigate the social, cognitive, biological, and psychological challenges associated with aging, as well as to improve the attitudes and interactions of other members of society toward older adults. Additionally, these efforts aim to actively involve elderly individuals in various aspects of social life, promoting their continued engagement and well-being.

¹² Tachibana K. Trends in gerontology in Japan – P. 150-156 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2117/psysoc.1959.150>

¹³ Leknitska. S, Sakhandia I. The development of educational gerontology in Ukraine under martial law.// Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series “Pedagogy and Psychology” 2024, 10(3), 17-28. doi: 10.52534/msu-pp3.2024.17.

¹⁴ Davison G.C, Igarashi Y. Gerontology research and education in the University of Southern California //Japanese Journal of Gerontology. 2010, Volume 18 – P.103-109 https://doi.org/10.24714/yca.18.0_103



REFERENCES

1. Ayan F.S. Three Decades of Gerontology in Türkiye: Historical Foundations, Multidisciplinary Growth, and Future Horizons // Journal of Aging and long-term care, 2024, 7(3) 151-166 p
2. Davison G.C, Igarashi Y. Gerontology research and education in the University of Southern California //Japanese Journal of Gerontology. 2010, Volume 18 – P.103-109 https://doi.org/10.24714/yca.18.0_103
3. Huang L., Zhu Q. Pragmatic Studies in Gerontolinguistics: Perspectives, Methods and Topics // Journal of East China Normal University. Philosoph, 2019. Vol. 51, № 6. P. 129–137.
4. Leknitska. S, Sakhanda I. The development of educational gerontology in Ukraine under martial law.// Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series “Pedagogy and Psychology” 2024, 10(3), 17-28. doi: 10.52534/msu-pp3.2024.17.
5. Makoni S.B. Gerontolinguistics in South Africa // International journal of applied linguistics. 1997. Vol. 7, № 1. P. 57–65.
6. Makoni S, Grainger K. Comparative Gerontolinguistics: characterizing discourses in caring institutions in South Africa and the United Kingdom // Journal of Social Issues. 2002. Vol. 58, № 4. P. 805–824.
7. Tachibana K. Trends in gerontology in Japan – P. 150-156 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2117/psysoc.1959.150>
8. Tsukada N, Maeda N, Iijima K. Expanding educational opportunities in gerontology in Japan//Innovation in Aging 2023, Vol. 7, No. S1
9. Xingren Xu. Exploring the impact of aging through transitivity: A Systemic Functional approach to Chinese elders’ narratives – The Pennsylvania State University, 2008. 167 p.
10. Yan Z., Yin G. Gerontolinguistics and Its Prospect in the Health Care Industry in Shandong // US-China Education Review. 2020. Vol. 10, № 2. P. 79–88.
11. Go L, Cyuy S. Stanovleniye gerontolingvistiki: vzglyad iz Kitaya // Russian Linguistic Bulletin, 2 (30) Июнь – С.2 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2022.30.29>
12. Pashina L.A. Konstituirovaniye gerontolingvisticheskoy paradigmy znaniya i yeye sovremennyye perspektivy //Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta Filosophiya. Sociologiya. Politologiya. 2021.№ 59. – P.101-110.

