Abstract: The research purpose is to study Mongolian dialects within the framework of the language-saving policy and to define their language vitality and endangerment based on some of the international criteria. In this research, we used several sociolinguistics methodologies such as sociological survey, collecting and developing the materials, investigative and statistical methods, correlational, analytic, synthetic methods, induction, and deduction. Here the authors tried to study the Language Vitality and Endangerment/Language Vitality Assessment (UNESCO 2003), which is used more commonly and frequently at the international level, to define Mongolian dialects/’languages’ vitality.

Finally, our research was made on eighteen Mongolian dialects such as khotong, darkhad, khalkh, Kazakh, bayad, uzemchin, torguud etc…. As a result of the research, most of the Mongolian dialects included in the categories such as don’t heritage their languages to the next generation or severely endangered. During the research, we observed that several factors such as demography, politics, geography, social and economic situation, psychology, population movement, government policy on language, and others are influencing the extinction of the minority languages of the nations and ethnic groups. Eventually, it is necessary to study, save, revitalize, and document the dialects and pass them to on the next generation.

Keywords: Minority language, language vitality, language protection, and language endangerment.

I. INTRODUCTION

This research was directed at modern sociolinguistics, language policy, and language planning studies. The purpose of the research work is to study the current situation of Mongolian dialects, the minority languages of nations, and ethnic groups, who are living in Mongolian territory, within the framework of the language-saving policy, and to define their language vitality and endangerment based on the international criteria. (Aikawa, Noriko 2001 UNESCO’s Programme on Languages, Conference Handbook on Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim, pp. 13-24. Osaka: Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim Project).

Saving and documenting languages, especially minority languages, play an essential role for international organizations, (endangeredlanguages.com) and governments because each language has a unique heritage and culture, created by human beings. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been conducting many projects and drafts to save and document minority languages and cultures for many years. One of them is the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger. (www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages)

The purpose of the Atlas is to spread the information in a more expanded range, to improve the citizens’ awareness/consciousness of linguistics and language diversity, to help the speakers, who use endangered or minority languages, and to motivate and increase the materials on linguistics in internet area and about 2500 languages involved in the Atlas and they have divided into five levels by their endangerment such as unsafe, definitely endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered, and extinct.

The languages involved in the UNESCO Red Book of Endangered Languages are classified as extinct, nearly extinct, seriously endangered, and potentially endangered. The Continent Red Book is also divided into three groups such as Asian Languages Red Book, African Languages Red Book, and European Languages Red Book.

The Webster linguists consider that 1,000 (15%) of the world all languages are in the American continent, 2,400 (35%) are in the African continent, 200 (3%) are in the European continent, 2,000 (28%) are in the Asian continent, 1,200 (19%) are in the Pacific Ocean countries and only a quarter of them are living languages. Although a few dialects have written languages, it is very hard to consider that all of them are living. Also, some experts said that less than five hundred people speak 1619 (23%), less than one hundred people speak 548 (8%), and less than ten people speak 204 (3%) of all the world languages are spoken by fewer than 10 people. This is because at least 50% of endangered languages are spoken within small communities. (Ethnologue: Language of the World. 15th ed. Dallas, Tex: SIL International. [16th ed. Available at: http://222.ethnologue.com])

In addition, the experts confirmed in 2023 that fifty percent of the 7105 languages in the world are endangered, only four percent of the world population speaks 96 percent of the languages, and 90 percent of the languages are...
not used on the internet area, and 80 percent of African languages don’t have any orthography and spelling rule. Scholars such as Campbell and Muntzel defined the reason for language endangerment as the following in 1989.

- Sudden death (the population dies out suddenly)
- Sudden language shift (when a population shifts to another language suddenly)
- Gradual death (when a group of people shifts to another language slowly)
- The language death starts in minority languages.

1. METHODS
In this research, we commonly used some kinds of sociolinguistics methodologies such as sociological survey, collecting and developing the materials, investigative and statistical methods, comparing logical methods, correlation methods, analytic and synthetic methods, induction, and deduction.

2. RESEARCH
This study emphasized the nine factors’ criteria for language Vitality and Endangerment, which are used more commonly and frequently at the international level.

**UNESCO’s nine factors (2003)**
The UNESCO research group, which works on language endangerment, developed the UNESCO Nine Factors in March in Paris in 2003. These nine factors (UNESCO Language Vitality (UNESCO 2009). International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research Vol.5, No 5, pp. 62-73, October 2017; /Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK (www.eajournals.org)/) have their detailed criteria, and each of them is evaluated by the grades from zero to five.

(Figure 1): UNESCO Language Vitality (UNESCO 2009). International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research Vol.5, No 5, pp. 62-73, October 2017; /Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK (www.eajournals.org)/

**Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission**
If the language is used by all ages of the population, from children up to elders, its grade is 5 and the endangerment degree is safe. If some of the children use the language in all domains, and all children use it in limited domains, its grade is 4 and unsafe. If the language is used mostly by the parental generation and up, its grade is 3 and definitively endangered. If the language is used mostly by the grand parental generation and up, its grade is 2 and severely endangered. If very few speakers use the language of the great-grand parental generation, its grade is 1 and critically endangered. If there exists no speaker, its grade is 0 and extinct.
Factor 2: Community Members’ Attitudes towards their own Languages. It is evaluated by the grades from zero to five, depending on the number of speakers among the whole population.

Factor 3: Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population

If all the population speaks the language, its grade is 5 and safe. Nearly all the population speak the language, its grade is 4 and unsafe. A majority speak the language, its grade is 3, and definitively endangered. A minority speaks the language, and its grades, and is severely endangered. Very few of the population speak the language, its grade is 1, and critically endangered. None speak the language; its grade is 0 and extinct.

Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

The language is used in all domains and for all functions its grade is 5 (universal use). Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions, its grade is 4 (multilingual parity). The language is in-home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains, its grade is 3 (dwindling domains). The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions, its grade is 2 (limited or formal domains). The language is used only in a very restricted domain and for very few functions, its grade is 1 (highly limited domains). The language is not used in any domain; for any function, its grade is 0 (inactive).

Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media

The language is used in all new domains, its grade is 5 (dynamic). The language is used in most new domains, its grade is 4 (robust/active). The language is used in many domains, its grade is 3 (receptive). The language is used in some new domains, its grade is 2 (coping). The language is used only in a few new domains, its grade is 1 (minimal). The language is not used in any new domains, its grade is 0 (inactive).

Factor 6: Materials for Language Education and Literacy

If there is an established orthography, literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education, its grade is 5. Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration, its grade is 4. Written materials exist and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media; its grade is 3. Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community; and for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum, its grade is 2. A practical orthography is known to the community and some material is being written, its grade is 1. No orthography is available to the community, its grade is 0.

Factor 7: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use

All languages are protected, and its grade is 5 (equal support). Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious, its grade is 4 (differentiated support). No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain; its grade is 3 (passive assimilation). The government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages, its grade is 2 (active assimilation). The dominant language is the sole official language, while non-dominant languages are neither recognized nor protected, its grade is 1 (forced assimilation). Minority languages are prohibited, its grade is 0 (prohibition).

Factor 8: Community Members’ Attitudes toward Their Own Language

All members value their language and wish to see it promoted; its grade is 5. Most members support language maintenance, its grade is 4. Many members support language maintenance: others are indifferent or may even support language loss, its grade is 3. Some members support language maintenance: others are indifferent or may even support language loss, its grade is 2. Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss, its grade is 1. No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language, and its grade is 0.

Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation

There are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts, and a constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist, its grade is 5 (superlative). There is one good grammar and several adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings, its grade is 4 (good). There may be adequate grammar or enough grammar dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio, and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation, its grade is 3 (fair). Some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts are useful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality, with or without any annotation, its grade is 2 (fragmentary). Only a few grammatical sketches, short wordlists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are of unusable quality, or are completely unannotated, its grade is 1 (inadequate).

3. RESULTS
In this study, we used the above-mentioned nine factors (UNESCO 2003) to define Mongolian 18 dialects’ language vitality and endangerment. Each factor is accompanied by a graded scale, whereby value five is assigned to the optimal. \(\text{(Appendix 1)}\)

According to the first of the nine factors named Intergenerational Language Transmission, \text{Khalkh} dialect/language gets 5 grades because the population of all ages uses the language, from children up. So, the endangerment degree is \textit{safe}. \text{Durvud}, \text{bayad}, and \text{buryat} dialects get 2 grades because, the language is used mostly by the grandparental generation and up, and the endangerment degree is \textit{severely endangered} other dialects get only 1 grade because the language is used mostly by very few speakers, of great-grandparental generation, and the endangerment degree is \textit{critically endangered}.

According to the second factor named Community Member’s Attitudes Towards Their Own Languages and the third factor named Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population, the \text{Khalkh} dialect/language gets 4.1 grades /2.168.100 speakers 82.4%/; \text{durvud} gets 1.4 grades, /72.403 speakers 2.8%/, \text{bayad} gets 1.1 grades /56.573 speakers 2.2%/; \text{buryat} gets 0.8 grades /45.087 speakers 1.7%/; \text{zakhchin} gets 0.6 grades /32.845 speakers 0.2%/; \text{dariganga} gets 0.5 grades /27.412 speakers 1%/; \text{uriankhai} gets 0.5 grades /26.654 speakers 1%/; \text{darkhad} gets 0.4 grades /21.538 speakers 0.8%/; \text{uld} gets 0.3 grades /15.520 speakers 0.6%/; \text{khotgoid} gets 0.3 grades /15.460 speakers 0.6%/; \text{torguud} gets 0.2 grades /14.176 speakers 0.5%; \text{khotong} gets 0.2 grades /11.304 speakers 0.4%/; \text{myangad} gets 0.1 grades /6.592 speakers 0.3%; \text{barga} gets 0.05 grades /2.989 speakers 0.1%/; \text{uzemchin} gets 0.05 grade /2.577 speakers 0.1%; \text{eljigen} gets 0.05 grades /1.340 speakers 0.1%; \text{sartuu} gets 0 grade /1.286 speakers 0%; \text{khamnigan} gets 0 grade /537 speakers 0% and \text{kharchin} gets 0 grade /152 speakers 0%.

According to the fourth factor named Trends in Existing Language Domains the \text{khalkh} dialect/language gets 5 grades because the language is used in all domains and for all functions and the degree of endangerment is \textit{universal use}, and all the other dialects get only 1 grade because the dialects are used only in a very restricted domain and for a very few functions. So, the degree of endangerment is \textit{highly limited domains}.

According to the fifth factor named Response to New Domains and Media, the \text{khalkh} language/dialect gets 5 grades because the language is used in all new domains, and the degree of endangerment is \textit{dynamic}; \text{bayad} and \text{buryat} dialects get 3 grades because they are used in many domains and the degree of endangerment is \textit{receptive}, and all of the other dialects don’t get any grades because they are not used in any new domains and the degree of endangerment is \textit{inactive}.

According to the sixth factor named Materials for Language Education and Literacy, the \text{Khalkh} language/dialect gets 5 grades because there is an established orthography, and literacy tradition with grammar, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education. Bayad and Buryat dialects get only 1 grade because practical orthography is known to the community and some material is being written and other dialects don’t get any grade because no orthography is available to the community.

According to the seventh factor named Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use, the \text{Khalkh} language/dialect gets 3 grades because no explicit policy exists for minority languages, the dominant language prevails in the public domain and the degree of support is \textit{passive assimilation} and other dialects get only 1 grade because the dominant language is the sole official language, while non-dominant languages are neither recognized nor protected and the degree of support is \textit{forced assimilation}.

According to the eighth factor named Community Members’ Attitudes toward Their Own Language, the \text{Khalkh} language/dialect gets 4 grades because most members support language maintenance and other dialects get only 1 grade because only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.

According to the ninth factor named Amount and Quality of Documentation, the \text{Khalkh} language/dialect gets 5 grades because there are comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts: constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist, and the nature of documentation is \textit{superlative} other dialects get only 1 grade because only a few grammatical sketches, short wordlists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are of unusable quality, or are completely unannotated and the nature of documentation is \textit{inadequate}.

As a result of the study, \text{Khalkh} dialect/language receives 41.2 (4.2) grades, \text{durvud} dialect gets 8.8 /0.9/grades, \text{bayad} dialect gets 12.2 (1.3) grades, \text{buryat} dialect gets 11.6 (1.2) grades, \text{zakhchin} dialect gets 6.2 (0.6) grades, \text{dariganga} and \text{uriankhai} dialects get 6 (0.6) grades, \text{darkhad} dialect gets 5.8 (0.6) grades, \text{uld} and \text{khotgoid} dialects get 5.6 (0.6) grades, \text{torguud} dialect gets 5.5 (0.6) grades, \text{khotong} dialect gets 5.4 (0.6) grades, \text{myangad} dialect gets 5.3 (0.5) grades, \text{barga}, \text{uzemchin}, and \text{eljigen} dialects get 5.1 (0.5) grades, \text{sartuu}, \text{khamnigan} and \text{kharchin} dialects get 5 (0.5) grades of total 45.

This study tried to define Mongolian dialects’ vitality and endangerment, using the most common criteria for language vitality and endangerment.

4. CONCLUSION
As a result of the survey, we observed that several factors such as demography, politics, geography, social and economic situation, psychology, population movement, government policy on language, and others are influencing to extinction of the minority languages of the nations and ethnic groups.

As a result of the research, according to the above-mentioned criteria, most of the Mongolian dialects included in the categories such as don’t heritage their languages to the next generation, severely endangered, critically endangered, endangered, or extinct.

Thus, the social necessity is arising to study the current situation of Mongolian dialects, the minority languages of nations, and ethnic groups, who are living in Mongolian territory, within the framework of the modern sociolinguistics theory and methodology, and to save, and revitalize, and document them from the side of language saving policy, and to define their language vitality and endangerment based on the international criteria.

It contributes not only to Asia, but also to the world’s cultural development by saving, documenting, and developing Mongolian dialects, the minority languages, and the culture of nations and ethnic groups, who are living in Mongolian territory.

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8. UNESCO MOST Clearing House on Linguistic Rights: [http://www.unesco.org/most/ln1.htm](http://www.unesco.org/most/ln1.htm)


### Appendix

Mongolian 18 dialects’ language vitality and endangerment. (UNESCO 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Khalkh</th>
<th>Durvud</th>
<th>Bayad</th>
<th>Buryat</th>
<th>Zakh-chin</th>
<th>Dari-ganga</th>
<th>Urian-khail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational Language Transmission</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute number of speakers</td>
<td>2.168.1</td>
<td>72.403</td>
<td>56.573</td>
<td>45.087</td>
<td>32.845</td>
<td>27.412</td>
<td>26.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population</td>
<td>82.4% /4,1/</td>
<td>2.8% /1,4/</td>
<td>2.2% /1,1/</td>
<td>1.7% /0,8/</td>
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<td>1.0% /0,5/</td>
<td>1.0% /0,5/</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Response to New Domains and Media</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Amount and Quality of Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
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<td>8,8/0,9</td>
<td>12,2/1,3</td>
<td>11,6/1,2</td>
<td>6,2/0,68</td>
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Continuation

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<th>Factors</th>
<th>Darkhad</th>
<th>Uuld</th>
<th>Khot-goid</th>
<th>Tor-guud</th>
<th>Khoton</th>
<th>Myangad</th>
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<td>Absolute number of speakers</td>
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<td>15.460</td>
<td>14.176</td>
<td>11.304</td>
<td>6.592</td>
<td>2.989</td>
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<td>0.8% /0,4/</td>
<td>0.6% /0,3/</td>
<td>0.6% /0,3/</td>
<td>0.5% /0,25/</td>
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<td>5,5/0,61</td>
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<th>Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Absolute number of speakers</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>1,286</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>152</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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