

THE PHENOMENON OF VOWEL HARMONY IN THE TASHKENT DIALECT

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Abstract

This article presents perspectives on the classification of Uzbek dialects, scholars' views on dialects that preserve vowel harmony and insights into the phonetic characteristics of the Tashkent dialect, including how vowel harmony is maintained in this particular dialect.

Keywords: dialect classification, vowel harmony, ethnic groups, classification.

Introduction

Recently, there have been various interpretations of vowel harmony, a phenomenon that has sparked debates and discussions among our linguists. It would not be an exaggeration to say that questions such as "Why doesn't the Uzbek language follow vowel harmony while all other Turkic languages do? Did it follow it in the past? When did the phenomenon of vowel harmony become alien to the Uzbek literary language?" are among the issues that concern many linguists. In our previous article, we provided information about the relationship between the Uzbek language and the phenomenon of vowel harmony, as well as our linguists' opinions on this matter, attempting to compare it with the Turkish language. [Look at: G.Mirzayeva. O'zbek va turk tillaridagi singarmonizm hodisasining qiyosiy tahlili. O'ZBEKISTON: til va madaniyat. Lingvistika. ToshDO'TAU – 2023 Vol.2(1)].

In this article, we will attempt to examine the phenomenon of vowel harmony in the Tashkent dialect, one of our dialects that forms the basis of the literary language. First, the following opinion of linguist H.Nematov can answer the question of whether vowel harmony existed in the Uzbek language: "The dialectics of vowels and consonants in the written monuments of ancient Turkic languages constitute a unified structure. It is a dialectical law that back vowels occur with consonants pronounced with a back articulation within an independent word". This indicates that the phenomenon of vowel harmony existed in all Turkic languages, including Uzbek. Several factors are cited as reasons for the disappearance of vowel harmony from the Uzbek literary language. These include the mixing of peoples, the influence of other languages, and certain political issues. Our opinion is supported by the following statement from scholar Sh. Shoabdurakhmonov: "It should also be noted that at one time, nine-vowel synharmonic dialects were adopted as

the basis of the common Uzbek language. When Uzbek writing transitioned to the Latinized alphabet in 1929, the future tense South Khorezm form **-ajak** (as in **kelajak**, **borajak**) and the present tense Kipchak form – **yatir** (as in **kelayatir**, **borayatir**) were adopted as literary language norms. However, abandoning vowel harmony and certain forms that had entered morphology, as well as relying on Uzbek urban dialects which historically dominated the development of the general Uzbek literary language, helped to correctly identify the sources of the literary language. The modern Uzbek literary language was formed on the basis of Tashkent-Fergana dialects”.

The dialects of Tashkent city and certain areas of Tashkent region have been studied by various scholars. R.Reshetov examined the Qurama dialects of Tashkent region, Sh.Afzalov investigated the Parkent dialect, Y.Gulomov and K.N. Nazarov researched the dialect of Bostanliq district, N.S.Gafurova studied the Niyozboshi dialect, and Sodiqov explored the lexicon of Tashkent region dialects. Additionally, Sh. Shoabdurahmonov and E.D. Polivanov analyzed the phonetic and morphological aspects of Tashkent dialects. In his doctoral dissertation titled “Uzbek Literary Language and Uzbek Folk Dialects”, Sh.Shoabdurahmonov states: “From a dialectological perspective, the Tashkent dialect has not been adequately studied. Nevertheless, Tashkent’s historical background and specific linguistic evidence suggest that this dialect has undergone complex linguistic processes through interactions not only with related Turkic tribal communities but also with unrelated ethnic elements. This indicates that it played a crucial role in the historical development of common Uzbek pronunciation”.

We know that the opposition of vowels and consonants plays a crucial role in the formation of vowel harmony. Scholar H. Nematov says the following about vowels in the Uzbek language: “In the phonological system of modern Uzbek literary language, only the features of labialization=non-labialization and narrow=mid=wide (*lablanganlik=lablanmaganlik, tor=o’rta=keng*) in vowels have the function of distinguishing meaning. All other differences (such as hardness=softness, length=shortness, clarity=reduction, etc. (*qattiq=yumshoqlik, cho’ziq=qisqalik, aniqlik=qisqarganlik*)) are insignificant and phonologically irrelevant for these phonemes. Therefore, in our speech, the sounds **u, o’, i, a** can appear both in hard form (for example, *qo’l, qul, qari, buzuq, qo’riq*, etc.) and in soft form (for example, *qo’l, qul, gil, katak, ko’zgu, bitik*, etc.), and in speech, especially in poetry, they can possess properties of length and brevity. Consequently, in the vowels of the Uzbek language, opposition has largely disappeared, and this, in turn, has inevitably influenced the disappearance of vowel harmony”.

In his article addressing the classification of Uzbek dialects, V.V.Reshetov notes that E.D.Polivanov, while studying Uzbek dialects, considered two phenomena: **metisat**, which is the mixing of related languages, and hybridization, the mixing of unrelated languages. E.D.Polivanov explained all phonetic changes in urban-type dialects as influenced by non-Turkic ethnic groups (i.e., substrate influence) and divided them into two major groups: *to become Iranian* and *non- Iranian* dialects. Consequently, many Uzbek dialects were influenced by Iranian pronunciation. The scholar also indicated that

the Bukhara-Samarkand-Khujand type dialects were maximally Iranian, while the rural dialects of Fergana with vowel harmony retained minimal features of the Iranian phonological system. Thus, in some villages of Fergana, one of our basic dialects, vowel harmony is preserved, which in turn indicates the presence of vowel harmony in our literary language, albeit incompletely. This is because the Fergana dialect serves as the morphological basis for our literary language.

Linguist K.K.Yudaxin studied certain Uzbek dialects and, as a result of determining their connection with related and unrelated languages, proposed a classification of Uzbek dialects into two groups. In the initial version of his classification, he divides Uzbek dialects into four groups based on their relationship with the Tajik language and the degree of preservation of vowel harmony: 1. Uzbek dialects that preserve the original Turkic sound system and vowel harmony; 2. Tajik dialects spoken in Uzbek and Tajik (urban dialects such as those of Samarkand and Bukhara). From the scholar's work on dialects, it can be observed that vowel harmony has been preserved in a certain portion of Uzbek dialects.

As we review the studies conducted on the Tashkent dialect, the dissertation by scholar Sh.Afzalov examining the Parkent dialect has caught our attention. We know that language is constantly evolving, and even within a decade, significant changes can occur in a language or dialect. It is certain that a dialect studied in 1962-1963 years has undergone some changes by today. We can say that among the Tashkent dialects, the Parkent dialect has preserved singarmonism (vowel harmony) quite well. For example: *bola* - *bala*, *opa* - *apa* (in the Parkent dialect, the word "*apa*" is often used to refer to the mother, while "*apcha*" is used for an older sister), *oftob* - *aptav*, *koptok* - *kaptav*, *ota* - *ada*, *kelinoyi* - *kennayi*. These variations can be observed in nouns, as well as in the formation of the present tense of verbs using **-vat**: *kelyapman* - *kevattim*, *boryapman* - *borvattim*.

In the Parkent dialect, one can observe the phenomenon of "a"-ization and the word "*bala*" from the old Turkic language has been preserved. The Parkent dialect features two variants of the letter "i": the front vowel "i" and the back vowel "ы". These sounds create oppositions in words. This feature can also be observed in the dialect of Tashkent city. It's worth noting that there's a significant difference in dialect between the generations born before and after 2000 in the Parkent district. This is because young people born after 2000 primarily communicate in a dialect closer to that of Tashkent city. For example, they use "*kevomman*" instead of "*kevattim*" and "*ona*" or "*oyi*" instead of "*apa*" for "mother".

Certainly, numerous words cited in the work of scholar Sh.Afzalov are still in use within the Parkent dialect today.

N. Gafurova, in her article, states the following about the Niyozboshi dialect, which is part of the Tashkent region: "The Niyozboshi dialect belongs to the "y"-using dialect group of the Uzbek language. In this dialect, vowel harmony is very weak. Consequently, particularly in terms of the use of possessive and case suffixes, it resembles the Tashkent dialect". The scholar also explains through examples that the use of possessive suffixes in the Niyozboshi dialect generally corresponds to the literary language, but in the plural form, it is similar to the Tashkent dialect: "In the dialect, the first-person plural forms *-miz*, *-miza* are mainly

found in the speech of older adults (elderly), while the forms *-uz*, *-uza* are predominantly used by school-age children. In this respect, the Niyozboshi dialect closely resembles the Tashkent dialect. The first-person plural form *-mize* is used less frequently compared to *-miz*. The general form in the dialect is *-miz*".

Scholar Sh. Shoabdurakhmanov, in his doctoral dissertation on the Uzbek literary language and Uzbek folk dialects, extensively covered the foundational dialects of Tashkent and Fergana, which formed the basis of the literary language. The scholar's dissertation thoroughly examines the changes in vowels, consonants, and sound variations in these dialects. Notably, he emphasizes the strong influence of Iranian dialects on the Tashkent dialect. He demonstrates through examples that there are six vowels in the Tashkent dialect and that there is no opposition between them. However, we cannot agree with this view of the scholar, as there are more than six vowels in the Tashkent dialect. We mentioned earlier the velar variant of the vowel *i*. Regarding the characteristics of "o" formation in dialects, he states: "The phenomenon of "o" arose in Uzbek dialects in two ways. 1. Under the influence of the labial [v] sound, for example: Tashkent: *borsomiz-borsovuz-borsouz*, *boramiz-borovuz-borovuza*. 2. Under the influence of deep back tongue sounds [q, g', x], for example: Tashkent: *Taroq-taro*, *qishloq-qishlo*. Additionally, the sounds [m, n, ng, r, l] also play a certain role in the emergence of o-lash".

This feature of "o" in the Tashkent dialect is actually a labial vowel harmony. The dialects of Tashkent city differ from one another depending on the area. In some parts of the city, the phenomenon of labial harmony is more pronounced. For example: *qoshiq - qoshu* (spoon), *o'rik - o'ru* (apricot), *bordik - bordu* (we went).

Furthermore, scholar Sh. Shoabdurakhmanov states the following about the correspondence of vowels in basic dialects: "Although the correspondence of vowels between dialects is not consistent, it does occur. This allows us to demonstrate that in one dialect, the corresponding vowel is preserved to a certain extent in another dialect. In Tashkent dialect: *chopon*, *bozor*, *mozor*, *somon*, *qozon*, *tovog'*, *qovog'*, *bulog'*, *tomog'*". Thus, from the scholar's work, it can be observed that labial harmony is partially preserved in the dialects of Tashkent city.

To sum up, after reviewing the aforementioned research on the Tashkent dialect and as a linguist residing in this region, we can state that in the territories of Tashkent city and Tashkent region, vowel harmony is partially preserved, albeit not completely. While we encounter more palatal vowel harmony in the Parkent dialect, labial vowel harmony is notably preserved in many areas of the Tashkent city dialect. An illustration of this is the prevalence of "o" pronunciation in the urban dialect.

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