



LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF THE KHOREZM DIALECT IN FOLK EPICS

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Abstract: This article provides a brief lexical analysis of words in the Khorezm dialect. Additionally, it discusses the role of the Oghuz dialect in the Uzbek language and its connections with other languages based on contemporary linguistic observations.

Key words: Lexicon of Khorezm epics, Oghuz dialect, Kipchak dialect, bilingualism.

Today, globalization is advancing rapidly, leaving its marks on various fields, with science and culture being no exception. Uzbekistan is also making significant advancements in this regard. This progress is attributed not only to the country's independence and the wise policies of the President but also to the nation's deep-rooted identity and unwavering dedication to the heritage of its ancestors.

At present, both international and Uzbek linguistics are experiencing renewal, growth, and transformation. Numerous changes are evident in Uzbek linguistics, where various branches are evolving, and new fields are emerging. Alongside these developments, the oral folk art that has been passed down from generation to generation is being extensively studied and researched. Oral folk literature serves as an invaluable source of information about people's lifestyles, traditions, history, customs, aspirations, and dreams.

Folk epics hold great significance due to their broad scope, artistic-stylistic techniques, and, most importantly, their preservation of ancient human characteristics. The language of these epics undoubtedly retains archaic lexical and grammatical elements of the national language. Research indicates that the Khorezm people have a long and rich history. Their cultural and spiritual heritage continues to play a significant role in the advancement of world science today. It is no coincidence that UNESCO has included some of Khorezm's unique cultural gems in its list of world heritage sites.

Currently, the customs, diverse dialects, and linguistic varieties of the Khorezm people are undergoing complex developmental processes. The languages of Turkic and non-Turkic tribes that have historically inhabited this region have interacted with other languages spoken in these territories since ancient times. Historical sources indicate that the ancient Khorezm script was widely used as early as the 7th–8th centuries and even earlier. This linguistic evolution is closely linked to socio-political developments.

By the 16th century, the ancient Khorezm language had merged with Uzbek, leading to the preservation of certain lexical elements to this day. The languages of ancient Turkic tribes, which mixed with both Turkic and Iranian languages, also had connections with the Altaic-Mongolic languages. These linguistic interactions intensified during the Mongol conquest of Central Asia in the 13th century. Furthermore, during the period of Arab rule in Central Asia, Uzbek-Arabic language contact emerged. Arabic became the dominant language of governance, religion, science, and official correspondence, and it was forcibly introduced as a

scholarly and religious language. Consequently, many local people became proficient in both their native tongue and Arabic, achieving fluency in writing and speech. These historical interactions—resulting from wars, trade relations, and cultural exchanges—have significantly influenced the linguistic landscape, leading to lexical borrowing and the emergence of multilingualism among various ethnic groups.

Epics hold a significant place in both the oral and written literature of the people. Studying the linguistic characteristics of epics not only helps determine their scientific and artistic value but also allows for an analysis of the relationship between literary language and dialects, providing valuable insights into the history and ethnography of the people.

The lexicon of Khorezm epics preserves important information about the living conditions, social status, and various economic, social, and political relations of many ethnic groups, both Turkic and non-Turkic, that existed in the past. The vocabulary of these epics is influenced by numerous factors, including the scope of the subject matter, the genre, the social background of readers and listeners, the knowledge level of the performers, and their worldview. Since lexicon reflects both internal and external influences more than other linguistic aspects, it helps trace cultural, political, and socio-economic changes in society. The foundation of the Khorezm dialects' vocabulary consists of layers characteristic of original Turkic languages. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the vocabulary of the Khorezm Kipchak dialect does not significantly differ from literary Uzbek. However, elements of the Oghuz dialect are more distinguishable. Additionally, certain words commonly used in Khorezm epics do not appear in literary Uzbek but are understood by speakers of both dialects, such as:

[yap] – large canal (*Urganch, Khonka*), smaller channel (*Gurlan*)

[dars] – dung

[atiz] – cultivated field

[diljak] – wheel

[qarinja] – ant

[o'ymoq] – thimble

[andimoq] – to observe

These words, while absent from literary Uzbek, remain familiar to speakers of both dialects. In this regard, the research of linguist Otanazar Madrahimov on the Oghuz dialects is particularly noteworthy. He states: "It is incorrect to assume that all of these words were borrowed from Persian-Tajik. There are two aspects to this phenomenon. First, the Khanate of Khiva maintained economic and cultural relations with Iran for centuries. Second, the presence of ancient Khorezmians in this region also played a role. Historical sources indicate that bilingualism (Khorezmian and Turkic) persisted in Khorezm until the 13th century."

Researchers who have studied the lexicon of epics have also noted that many words found in Uzbek epics belong to the Kipchak dialect of Uzbek and are also characteristic of other Turkic languages, such as Kazakh, Karakalpak, Nogai, as well as Tatar and Bashkir. This suggests that these dialects and languages belong to the same linguistic group.

Social and political events throughout history have left their mark on language. This influence is particularly evident in the language of Khorezm folk epics, especially in their manuscript versions. These epics cannot be classified as purely oral or purely written literature, as their language reflects a synthesis of both forms. They also contain archaic

words from ancient Turkic and dialectal layers, along with borrowed elements that have been preserved over time.

To conclude, a significant proportion of the lexicon in Khorezm epics consists of elements characteristic of Turkic languages. This is unsurprising, given that these epics originated in the Khorezm region and were performed in the dialects and speech varieties of the local population. Since the Oghuz and Kipchak dialects of Uzbek dominate in this region, they have played a central role in shaping the language of Khorezm epics. As these dialects belong to the core branches of Turkic languages, the primary linguistic features of Khorezm epics are also based on the Turkic language family.

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