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Presentation date: March, 2024
Date of acceptance: August, 2024
Publication date: September, 2024

THE ORIGIN

AND STUDY OF THE NORTHERN DIALECT IN THE INTERREGIONAL LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF THE AZERBAIJANI LANGUAGE

EL ORIGEN Y EL ESTUDIO DEL DIALECTO SEPTENTRIONAL EN LAS CARACTERÍSTICAS LINGÜÍSTICAS INTERREGIONALES DEL IDIOMA AZERBAIYANO

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Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Samadova, K. (2024). The origin and study of the Northern dialect in the interregional linguistic features of the Azerbaijani language. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 16(5), 189-194.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this work is to analyze the distinctive linguistic characteristics of the Northern dialect compared to other dialects of Azerbaijan. The study of dialectal lexicon should first focus on understanding the historical development of each language and certain linguistic groups, as well as specific social history events. Some words in the northern dialect spread over a large area, while others cover smaller regions, and some are used only in individual villages. The extent of a word's area is not the main issue; all these words are important as lexical units and have entered our dialects from different languages. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate their origins and the processes through which they entered our language. Words that spread widely may reflect historical trade routes, migration patterns, or cultural exchanges, while those confined to smaller areas may indicate localized interactions or isolated communities. Even words used in individual villages can offer valuable information about micro-level linguistic changes and the preservation of archaic terms. Understanding the origin of these words involves tracing their etymological roots and identifying the languages they were borrowed from. This requires examining historical records, linguistic studies, and cultural exchanges. By studying these aspects, linguists can gain a comprehensive understanding of how different influences have shaped the dialectal lexicon, reflecting broader historical and social processes.

Keywords: Origin of dialects, Comparison of Turkic languages, Mixed dialect groups, Ethnic composition, Historical lexicon.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar las características lingüísticas distintivas del dialecto del norte en comparación con otros dialectos de Azerbaiyán. El estudio del léxico dialectal debe centrarse primero en comprender el desarrollo histórico de cada lengua y de ciertos grupos lingüísticos, así como eventos históricos sociales específicos. Algunas palabras del dialecto del norte se extienden por un área grande, mientras que otras cubren regiones más pequeñas y algunas se usan sólo en aldeas individuales. La extensión del área de una palabra no es la cuestión principal; todas estas palabras son importantes como unidades léxicas y han llegado a nuestros dialectos desde diferentes idiomas. Por ello, es crucial investigar sus orígenes y los procesos a través de los cuales ingresaron a la lengua. Las palabras que se difunden ampliamente pueden reflejar rutas comerciales históricas, patrones migratorios o intercambios culturales, mientras que aquellas confinadas a áreas más pequeñas pueden indicar interacciones localizadas o comunidades aisladas. Incluso las palabras utilizadas en aldeas individuales pueden ofrecer información valiosa sobre los cambios lingüísticos a nivel micro y la preservación de términos arcaicos. Comprender el origen de estas palabras implica rastrear sus raíces etimológicas e identificar las lenguas de las que fueron tomadas. Esto requiere examinar registros históricos, estudios lingüísticos e intercambios culturales. Al estudiar estos aspectos, los lingüistas pueden obtener una comprensión integral de cómo diferentes influencias han dado forma al léxico dialectal, reflejando procesos históricos y sociales más amplios.

Palabras clave: Origen de los dialectos, Comparación de lenguas turcas, Grupos de dialectos mixtos, Composición étnica, Léxico histórico.

INTRODUCTION

Language, a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release (Crystal & Robins, 2024). Each language has distinctive features, such as grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and writing, which differentiate it from others (Repka, 2021). In this regard, Azerbaijani, also known as Azeri, is the primary and official language of Azerbaijan. It is a Turkic language closely related to and mutually intelligible with modern Turkish. Azerbaijani serves as the official language in Azerbaijan, with 92.5% of the population speaking it as their mother tongue. The language has two main periods of development: the ancient period, spanning from the 13th to the 18th centuries, and the modern period, which began in the late 18th century and continues to this day (Garibli, 2021). Azerbaijani has been influenced by Persian, Arabic, and to a lesser extent, Russian. It is spoken not only in Azerbaijan but also in neighboring countries such as Iran and parts of southern Russia. The language has played a relevant role in the literature, music, art, and other cultural expressions of Azerbaijan (Sadigova, 2022). It is used in daily communication, education, and government administration, highlighting its cultural and social significance. In general terms, Azerbaijani is an essential part of Azerbaijan's identity and everyday life and due to its rich history and substantial impact on the country's culture and society, it remains a vital element of the nation's heritage.

A dialect, or dialectal variant, is one of the possible manifestations of a specific language. It emerges within a particular context, typically geographical, and does not have radical differences from the language that would completely prevent understanding (Murray & Simon, 2006). Studying dialects is important because they reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of a region or community. Additionally, examining dialects can provide valuable insights into the history, traditions, and social interactions of a group of speakers. Understanding dialects is also crucial for translation and localization, as it allows for the adaptation of language to regional and cultural variations, which is essential in the context of global communication (Greenberg, 2020).

In Azerbaijan, there are ancient words in the dialect groups of the northern dialect that are not used in our modern literary language. A word that is used in one sense in modern literary language may have a completely different meaning here. Sometimes a word has an additional meaning

or meanings in the dialect along with its meaning in the literary language. Additionally, words used in the dialect sometimes have a certain boundary in meaning. There are words whose meaning is understood only in a certain village (or villages) of the dialect, but not in others. Or the same word may have one meaning in a certain village and a completely different meaning in another. In general, the lexicon of our dialects is a rich treasure. Studying this treasure is both theoretically and practically important (Islamov, 1968, p. 179).

The language of the population living in the northern zone of the Republic of Azerbaijan is rich and interesting with its lexical features. This area is not only the oldest settlement of Azerbaijan but also one of the mixed ethnic zones. It is a historical fact that Turkic tribes, especially Kipchaks, settled here in the 3rd-6th centuries (Veliev, 1921). Sometimes, when we go deep into the regions, we see that there were dialects that passed from the languages of minorities to the language of Azerbaijanis and vice versa (Masimova, 2014, p. 4).

As a result of the arrival and formation of Kipchak tribes in that region, which is located on the borders of Georgia and Dagestan, the characteristic features of the Turkic languages of the Kipchak group are more prominent in those dialects today (Guliyev, 2023). The richness of the phonetic, morphological, and syntactic structure of the dialect groups of the northern dialect has its own lexical composition.

In general, there are more differences in the lexical composition of modern Turkish languages than in the phonetic structure. To follow the historical development process of any language, it is necessary to study the dialect lexicon of that language. One of the important factors in the study of the dialect lexicon is to meet and compare these lexical units with the materials of the modern literary language and ancient written monuments, as well as languages related to that language (Samadova, 2023, p. 39). It is also known from the works written about the historical lexicon of the Azerbaijani language that elements of the Oghuz and Kipchak tribal languages participated and played a certain role in the formation of our language in literary norms, and in its further development and stabilization later on. Thus, the objective of this work is to analyze how the northern dialect of the Azerbaijani language originated, as well as to delve into its distinctive linguistic characteristics in comparison with other dialects of Azerbaijan. The work also explores the linguistic interactions and differences between the regions where this dialect is spoken, providing a deeper understanding of the diversity and evolution of the Azerbaijani language in interregional contexts.

DEVELOPMENT

Researcher Gurbanova, based on Demirchizade's opinion, notes that when the national language is forming, dialects increase and develop, but when the national language is formed, dialects regress. A. Demirchizade did not completely deny that the dialects have an ethnic essence. According to her, before the universal language, dialects retain the traces and characteristics of tribal languages to a certain extent (Gurbanova, 2014, p. 14).

Kahramanov notes that Oghuz and Kipchak language elements worked together with Azeri words, created series of synonyms, and managed to expand their possibilities even more without staying within a limited framework. This is also the case in the lexicon of the Nasimi language. In the 14th and 15th centuries, it was no longer possible to draw a boundary between Azeri words and related elements in the Oghuz-Kipchak tribal languages. Therefore, in this period, the language elements of the Oghuz and Kipchak tribes were evaluated not as words of different tribal languages, but as vocabulary units that took their place among the words of Turkic origin belonging to the lexical composition of the unified Azerbaijani language.

The researcher emphasized that it is very difficult to determine the number of words that should be included among the Oghuz-Kipchak and Azeri elements, which were also developed in Nasimi's lexicon, and their repeated usage and wider possibilities. Because dozens of words such as "do" and "do", "go" and "arrive", "side" and "fold", "say" // "say" and "say", "bu" and "ush", although attributed to different Turkic languages, were equally functional units in Nasimi's language and were repeated many times. Many of those words used in Nasimi's language, which are archaic for our modern language, were used in written literature from the Orkhon-Yenisei and "Kitabi Dede Korkut" epics to the 19th century, and most of them still remain in our dialects (Gahramanov, 1970, pp. 14–15).

The lexical composition of the Karachay-Balkar, Karaim, and Kumyk languages, which are characterized as Kipchak or Western Kipchak languages, but actually reflect more Bulgarian-Caspian elements, is also very rich. Of course, the leading part of the lexical composition of Turkic languages is made up of words of pure Turkic origin. A certain part of such words is mainly common. In most Turkic languages, it is used with minor phonetic changes. However, in the lexical composition of those languages, there are also words used in a certain area, which are typical for one or more related languages. Word groups that are characteristic of individual Turkic languages, but used and understood only in that language, also appear (this is more recent). It is more appropriate to study and

group the lexical composition of Turkic languages - words of pure Turkic origin in this aspect (Guliyev, 2023, p. 44). Dialect lexicon helps such studies with its rich word base. Because even today, words and phrases that have passed through different historical periods of the language and have traces of centuries are used here.

In his research, A. Huseynov also points out the importance and method of studying the dialectal lexicon and notes that the expressions and phrases of the local dialect have not only phonetic and grammatical signs but also stylistic and lexical features, which are unique and lawful. In addition to reflecting the events related to the lifestyle, production, history, and traditions of the population in the area where a certain dialect was formed, it incorporates relevant events related to the basis of a language (Huseynov, 1979, p. 74).

A. Huseynov shows that it is appropriate to conduct the study of dialect lexicon in two directions - on a historical-social basis, and in the direction of studying linguistic development or historical-linguistic development basis. Based on N.I. Ashmarin, he finds it appropriate to carry out the division in the following form: When studying the dialect lexicon on historical-social grounds, the following grouping should be done when lexical material is grouped and systematized:

- a) household lexicon;
- b) economic lexicon;
- c) lexicon related to social structure and systems.

As we mentioned, since the dialect groups of the northern dialect are a mixed group, the study of the dialect lexicon here helps to explore lexical rules such as uncovering the process of the local population gradually changing its language, trying to speak a new - another language, not being able to easily separate from the phonetic system of its mother tongue, or even preserving the previous pronunciation structure in several generations. Sometimes the people who make a forced transition from one language to another use the lexical possibilities of their native language when they have difficulty remembering the elements of the foreign language while speaking, or when they do not know the words of that language. In this sense, it is necessary to be careful in applying the concept of "acquiring" in the local dialect of the population of that region so that the lexical units of the foreign language are not confused with the local language. It follows that the substrate cannot be taken into lexical units. Because there are more substrate forms of lexical units in Zagatala-Gakh dialects. When we approach the analysis of the Shiv lexicon on the linguistic

level, it is possible to discover that there are a number of interesting and cross-directional processes.

A. Huseynov also notes that it is necessary to investigate the features of the emergence of words in dialects and their subsequent development stages in four directions:

1. Lexical differentiation;
2. Semantic differentiation;
3. Literalism;
4. Acquisitions.

Based on this division, we have studied the dialect groups of the northern dialect in four directions:

1. Lexical differentiation: Dialectal lexical differences indicate territorial diversity or sameness of meaning in territorial unity. For example: words that are used in different forms in different areas, such as prophet, meka, mekabugda, corn, are used in the same name as "corn".
2. Semantic differentiation: This method influenced the development of dialectal lexicon in another direction, which is almost the opposite of the first one. For example, the word "civir // civir" means "stone wall" in Zagatala, "small thicket forest" in Karabakh, and "self-growing willow tree" in Mugan languages. It is clear from this that the meaning diversity of the same word is related to territorial diversity. Here, the main factor determining the semantic differentiation may be territorial diversity.
3. Literalism: In the historical formation of the dialectal lexicon, this method manifests itself in several directions:
 - a) Suffixes in the literary language sometimes create words in the common language that remain only in dialects; For example: swing (Gaz.), swing (Gar.), swing (Gakh, Zag.), swing (Bak.).
 - b) Preservation of ancient word roots and words formed from these word roots: *üy-barmag*, *üy-sü-k*; *il-ki-maq*. In the Sheki dialect, words such as *ilim-ilim* lost, *il-gi-m* were born from the word used in the meaning of "disappear, disappear". The presence of such word roots gives grounds for identifying older traces.
 - c) Formation of words with different word roots and different suffixes ensured the historical enrichment of the lexicon of local dialects. As for the comparative compatibility of the modern dialect lexicon with the lexical materials of the new and ancient Turkic languages, it can be said that this is an interesting and new research in both Turkology and Azerbaijani linguistics.
4. Borrowings: Dialectal borrowings in dialects are limited by their nature; they are borrowings that are limited by territoriality. There are borrowings from Georgian in

Gakh, Avar in Zagatala, and partly from Sakhur. It is impossible to remove them from the language.

Another group of borrowings in the dialect lexicon are words that did not come from Arabic, Persian, or Russian, but gained a dialectal character within territorial limits. Such words are used in the same sense with phonetic variations in different dialects. Dialects have historically played an important role in the enrichment of the literary language and still show their influence to some extent today. Dialects attract attention with the comprehensiveness of their vocabulary (Bayramov, 2011, p. 120).

Shiraliyev notes that the use of borrowed words in dialects differs from the literary language in a number of aspects. He notes that the words taken from the Caucasian-Iberian languages are prominent here, and the words of Arabic and Persian origin have undergone more changes compared to the literary language. M. Shiraliyev shows three main sources of words taken in our dialects, including the vocabulary of dialect groups of the northern dialect: Arabic and Persian; Russian; Caucasian-Iberian languages. Since our people interacted with the Middle Eastern, Russian, and Caucasian-Iberian peoples for centuries, the languages also had an influence on each other, and first of all, it showed itself in the lexical composition of the language. Borrowed words in the vocabulary of dialects have undergone more changes either in terms of form or content, unlike loanwords in the literary language. We must add that loanwords do not occupy the same place in all our dialects. The Arabic and Persian words used in the eastern group are more common than in the dialects in the western group. Words taken from Caucasian-Iberian languages appear in the lexicon of the dialect groups of the northern dialect, as well as West Azerbaijan and Georgian Azerbaijani.

Words from Arabic and Persian: As these types of words entered the vocabulary of the language a long time ago, these changes were of two types: 1) Some of these words gradually lost their independence and melted into the local word. In the early times, these words were used together with local words: *dar* - nine, *deva* - medicine, etc. Later it was changed to a local word: *uzundraz*, *dardoggaz*.

Arabic and Persian words gradually lost their phonetic form over many years due to the effects of the phonetic laws of the language (consonant law, dissonance, dissimilation, assimilation, etc.): gradually - *ahaste*, *babat* - *bobat*, etc.

The Russian language and words of Russian and European origin through it are divided into two parts:

1) Words from the period before the establishment of Soviet power: aptik, agushga, iskan, gofta, sajen, soldat, etc.

2) Words that passed after the Soviet rule. It includes words related to the rapid development of new social attitudes, economy, technology, science and culture: farm, savkhoz, irayon, gassir, agranom, partkom, etc.

Words from Caucasian-Iberian languages: The problem of interaction and influence of the Caucasian-Iberian languages and the Azerbaijani language is probably one of the unexplored areas. In this regard, a number of examples that we have shown are definitely not judgments, but probabilities. Later studies will clarify the extent to which the assumption is true. There are words from Georgian, Lezgi, and to a lesser extent from Armenian.

Words from Dagestan languages: Words from the Dagestan languages appear in the lexical composition of neighboring dialects of these languages in a very prominent way. Examples:

- adiy means "mother, aunt", and "grandmother" in Sakhur;
- beteley (Zag.) - "uncle's wife", also has this meaning in Avar;
- vidar (Kakh - I.Su, Zag. - Ash.T.) "trail that can be passed with difficulty", it has the same meaning in Sakhur and Lezgi languages;
- Gamac (Kakh -I.Su) - "stone", also has this meaning in rowing;
- k'oc (Kakh - I.Su) - "shalman, a dense and long tree used when building a roof", is used in the form of k'oci in Avar;
- k'utsun – "kidney", used in Lezgi in the form of tsurk;

Dagoy (Kakh - Gul.) - "dog", it is also used in this sense in Sakhur;

asdami // isdami (Kakh - I.Su) - "your husband", it is also used in this sense in rowing;

parkhalakh (Kakh - Alm.) - "bladder", it is used in the same sense as parkhana in Sakhur;

shapel // chapel (Kakh - I.Su) "dirty", it is also used in Sakhur in this sense;

khaima (Kakh - I.Su) – "palaz, a type of thin carpet woven from wool to build a tent", is also used in this sense in rowing;

khuk'arı (Kakh - I.Su) - "small basket, basket made of tree bark", is used in the form of khikiri in Avar in the sense of "basket, basket".

Words from the Georgian language: Detailed information about the words that entered the vocabulary of our dialects from the Georgian language is given in the article "About Georgian-Azerbaijani language relations" and in the article "Georgian lexical elements in the Dmanis language of the Azerbaijani language" by V. T. Cangidze.

The examples we will give are based on the dialectological materials we collected both from the above-mentioned works and from the Mughan group and Borchali dialects:

- caja (Gar.) - "grape bunch" (from here the expression *catcha vodka* was derived). This word is used in Georgian as *chacha*;
- cincar (Sha.) - "nettle", used in the same way and meaning in Georgian;
- mera (Mugh.) - "low land", "low fertile land" in the form of *mere* in Georgian;
- mangal - "sickle" (in ancient Georgian, sickle was called *mangal*);
- akhshebi - a place name, in Georgian *axo* - a place of cultivation, *-eb* is a plural suffix.

Turkish lexemes used only in Balakan, Zagatala, Gakh, Sheki, Oguz, Gabala dialects, dialect units that are not found in dialects of other languages are linguistic elements of Khazars, Bulgars, Sabirs and other brave Turkic tribes whose written monuments have been destroyed. One of the issues that draws attention here is the division of the lexical fund into two:

- a) dialect facts representing the oldest Turkish lexical layer;
- b) lexemes of Caucasian origin, which are the result of mixing with the neighboring Caucasian peoples.

It is appropriate to divide it into these categories. The Arab-Persian origin words in this region are a minority (Islamov, 1968, p. 160).

CONCLUSIONS

Borrowings constitute a significant portion of the northern Azerbaijani dialect's vocabulary. These dialectal borrowings are inherently limited, as they have developed within specific territorial constraints. In regions such as Gakh, there are borrowings from Georgian, in Zagatala from Avar, and partly from Sakhur. These borrowings are deeply embedded in the language and cannot be easily removed. Although the influx of words from Russian and European languages increased with the establishment of

Soviet power in Azerbaijan, many of these words disappeared from the dialect lexicon after the Soviet Union's collapse. Another set of derivations in the dialect lexicon consists of words that did not originate from Arabic or Persian but acquired a dialectal character within territorial boundaries. These words are used in the same sense with phonetic variations across different dialects.

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