

4-12-2010

Linguistic Features of Uzbek

Emily Walton

Department of English, Boise State University

Larina Lynne

Department of English, Boise State University

Monica Nesbitt

Department of English, Boise State University

Tyler Casperson

Department of English, Boise State University

Michael Christensen

Department of English, Boise State University

See next page for additional authors

Authors

Emily Walton, Larina Lynne, Monica Nesbitt, Tyler Casperson, Michael Christensen, Anna Cox, Janelle Derie, Zachary Espil, Claire Ivins, Erin Lind, and Anneliese Satz

Linguistic Features of Uzbek

Emily Walton, Larina Lynne, Monica Nesbitt, Tyler Casperson, Michael Christensen, Anna Cox, Janelle Derie, Zachary Espil, Claire Ivins, Erin Lind, and Anneliese Satz
BSUlinguists@gmail.com

Introduction

Over the course of a semester, students in the English Senior Seminar for the linguistics emphasis documented the Uzbek language as a group project. This allowed students to gain proficiency in linguistic fieldwork methodologies.

What is linguistic fieldwork?

- Gathering linguistic data from native speakers of a language not spoken by any of the students.
- Analyzing collected data and documenting phonetic, phonological, morphological, and syntactic features.

Why linguistic fieldwork for the Senior Seminar?

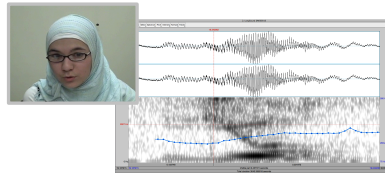
- Students apply linguistic topics and theories learned in other courses by documenting the distinct linguistic features of a language other than English.
- By recording elicitation sessions, the recordings will be made available for further analysis by linguists around the world.

Why Uzbek?

- Uzbek is spoken by refugees and immigrants in the Boise area.
- It is also under-documented in the linguistic literature.

Methods

- A 19-year old female native speaker of Uzbek was consulted for this project.
- Students met with the language consultant for 45 minutes on a weekly basis over the course of a semester.
- Audio and video recordings were made during consultations.
- All recordings were phonetically transcribed and analyzed
- Each week, a different team of students led the data elicitation sessions and class discussion regarding the findings.



Linguistic Features – Morphology and Syntax

The following are personal pronouns in Uzbek:

Singular pronouns	Plural pronouns
<i>I</i> [man]	<i>we</i> [b:zɛ]
<i>you</i> [san]	<i>you</i> [silɛ]
<i>he/she/it</i> [u]	<i>they</i> [ula]

Verbs are conjugated to reflect person and number:

Subject	Object	Verb
man	futbɔl	oɪnimman
<i>I</i>	soccer	play
b:zɛ	futbɔl	oɪnjimas
<i>we</i>	soccer	play
san	futbɔl	oɪnisan
<i>you</i>	soccer	play
silɛ	futbɔl	oɪnislɛ
<i>you (plural)</i>	soccer	play
u	futbɔl	oɪnida
<i>he/she/it</i>	soccer	play
ula	futbɔl	oɪnɪʃada
<i>they</i>	soccer	play

Because each person and number has their own conjugation, pronouns are not required in Uzbek – it is a pro-drop language. Therefore, both of the following sentences mean the same thing:

- [u rɔk musikasɪn ɪʃtadɛ]
he/she/it rock music listen (3rd pers.sg.)
subject object verb
- [rɔk musikasɪn ɪʃtadɛ]
rock music listens (3rd pers.sg.)
object verb

Both mean *'He listens to rock music'*

Uzbek has at least one morpheme that marks direct objects, this is also known as the **accusative marker**. This is expressed in the form of a suffix [-ɪn] or [-sɪn] attached to the object.

- [u rɔk musikasɪnɪn ɪʃtadɛ]
he/she/it rock music **(acc.marker)** listen (3rd pers.sg.)
subject object verb
'he listens to rock music'
- [musika manganɪlgom beradɪ]
rock music to me inspiration it gives (3rd pers.sg.)
subject object verb
'music inspires me'

Language Background

- (Northern) Uzbek is the official language of Uzbekistan and is classified as an Eastern Turkic language belonging to the Altaic language family.
- There are approximately 20,510,000 speakers of Uzbek living in Uzbekistan.
- As a former member nation of the Soviet Union, there are many Russian borrowings in the languages spoken in Uzbekistan.



Linguistic Features – Phonology

There are 27 distinct consonantal sounds in Uzbek.

Phonemic Inventory (preliminary)

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Plosive	p b	t d			k g q	ʔ	
Nasal	m	n			ŋ		
Trill		r					
Fricative	ɸ β	s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ	χ ʁ	h
Affricate			tʃ dʒ				
Approximant				j			
Lateral Approximant		l					

- Voiced consonants undergo devoicing in word-final position:
[kʊs] 'eye' → [kʊzɫar] 'eyes'
- Nasals assimilate in place of articulation to the following consonant:
[ɔn] 'ten' + [bir] 'one' → [ɔmbir] 'eleven'

What next?

Our group is planning to submit abstracts and original manuscripts detailing our findings to linguistic journals and conferences in the fields of phonetics and phonology, language documentation, and Altaic linguistics.

Selected References

- Boeschoten, Hendrik. "Uzbek." *The Turkic Languages*. Ed. Lars Johanson and Éva Agnes. Csató. London: Routledge, 1998. 357-78.
- CIA. *CIA World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, 18 Mar. 2010. Web. 06 Apr. 2010. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>.
- Ethnologue, Languages of the World. Web. 06 April 2010. www.ethnologue.com.