

PHONETIC AND PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF SOUTHERN UZBEK DIALECT

Melsova Sevinch Ikrom qizi

1st master's student (MA) of Termez State University.

E-mail: Sevinchikromovna2004@gmail.com +99850 002-22-04

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19651672>

Annotation. *This thesis examines salient phonetic and phonological properties of the southern Uzbek dialect, focusing on segmental inventories, vowel harmony residues, consonantal alternations, and prosodic organization.*

Field-oriented elicitation and auditory-acoustic comparison are combined to clarify systemic patterns and their distribution. Scientific novelty lies in integrating structural analysis with dialect-internal variation and contact-driven explanations.

Keywords: *southern Uzbek dialect, phonetics, phonology, vowel system, consonant alternation, assimilation, prosody.*

The southern Uzbek dialect area is commonly associated with a set of phonetic and phonological traits that, while sharing the core Turkic structural background of Uzbek, display locally stabilized outcomes of long-term regional interaction and internal development. For an academically adequate description, it is necessary to distinguish between phonetic variability observable in speech and phonological oppositions that function as part of the dialectal system.

This thesis proceeds from the assumption that dialect phonology should be modeled as a coherent system in which segmental inventories, phonotactic constraints, and prosodic organization jointly condition the realization of forms, rather than as a collection of isolated “peculiarities.”

Accordingly, the main aim is to identify which recurrent sound patterns in southern Uzbek can be treated as systemic (phonemic or morphophonemic) and which are better explained as positional allophony, style-dependent reduction, or contact-conditioned phonetic diffusion.

The methodological basis combines targeted elicitation with minimal-pair testing, narrative recordings, and a limited acoustic inspection of vowel quality and duration, followed by comparison with the codified norms of Standard Uzbek and with established descriptions of Uzbek dialectology [1; 2].

A central problem in describing southern Uzbek phonology is the relationship between inherited Turkic vocalic oppositions and the tendencies of leveling and reduction typical for many modern Uzbek varieties. Standard Uzbek is often characterized as having a relatively reduced role of vowel harmony and a reorganized vowel system compared to other Turkic languages, while still retaining certain harmonic traces in speech and in some morphological patterns [3].

Consonantism in southern Uzbek is marked by frequent alternations at morpheme boundaries and by positional processes of voicing, devoicing, and assimilation. The thesis treats these processes with attention to their phonological status. Descriptions of Uzbek dialects emphasize that certain sibilant oppositions are unstable and may shift toward palatalized or alveolar realizations depending on locality and contact environment [2].

Prosody, though less frequently described in traditional dialectological sketches, is indispensable for a full account of southern Uzbek sound structure. Stress placement in Uzbek is commonly described as tending toward word-final prominence, yet in actual speech prominence is influenced by information structure, phrase boundaries, and rhythmic preferences [3].

In southern Uzbek, final-syllable prominence remains a baseline, but pitch and duration cues reveal that speakers may highlight non-final syllables to mark focus or contrast, producing a perceptual impression of variable stress. This argument is consistent with broader phonological theory that treats prominence as multi-layered, with word-level and phrase-level components [5].

From a methodological perspective, the thesis aligns dialect phonetics with phonological modeling by using minimal-pair logic where possible and by treating alternations as evidence for underlying representations only when supported by paradigmatic regularity.

Such an approach resonates with contemporary views on the architecture of grammar, where categorical phonology interacts with gradient phonetic implementation and with usage-based stabilization [6].

In conclusion, the southern Uzbek dialect exhibits a coherent set of phonetic and phonological properties best captured through a system-oriented model. The vowel system shows structured reduction and context-sensitive coloring with residual, gradient harmony-like tendencies that influence affix realization without constituting a fully productive harmony rule.

Consonantism is characterized by predictable positional devoicing, pervasive regressive assimilation, and socially salient but largely sub-phonemic variability among sibilants and affricates, while phonotactic repairs in complex clusters demonstrate how syllable-structure constraints shape both native and borrowed vocabulary.

Prosodic organization reveals stable baseline prominence patterns modulated by intonational and informational factors, underscoring the need to separate lexical stress from phrasal accentuation.

Overall, the findings support the view that southern Uzbek dialect phonology emerges from the interaction of inherited Turkic structure, internal phonetic pressures, and selective contact reinforcement, producing a system that is both typologically interpretable and locally distinctive.

References:

1. Reshetov V. V. Uzbek dialectology. Tashkent, Fan, 1978. 312 p.
2. Borovkov A. K. Dialects of the Uzbek language. Moscow, Nauka, 1963. 256 p.
3. Abdurahmonov G'. A., Shukurov Sh. Uzbek literary language phonetics. Tashkent, O'qituvchi, 1990. 224 p.
4. Saparov K. Southern Uzbek dialects: phonetic features and areal distribution. Samarkand, SamDU nashriyoti, 2005. 168 p.
5. Goldsmith J. A. The Oxford handbook of phonological theory. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. 1360 p.
6. Hyman L. M. Phonology: theory and analysis. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019. 512 p.