



## **ANALYSIS OF PHONETIC TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE LEXICON OF OLD UZBEK LANGUAGE**

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### **Abstract**

The article analyzes the phonetic transformations that occurred in the lexicon of the old Uzbek language, in particular, the phenomena of epenthesis, metathesis, assimilation, dissimilation and synharmonism/vowel harmony. During the research, examples of classical literature, including lexical units in the works of Alisher Navoi, were studied comparatively with the modern Uzbek literary language. The article reveals the laws of adaptation of Arabic and Persian borrowings to Turkic pronunciation and the historical reasons for the replacement of sounds.

**Keywords:** Ancient Uzbek language, historical phonetics, epenthesis, metathesis, assimilation, dissimilation, vowel harmony, phonetic transformation, lexical layer.

### **Introduction**

#### **Annotatsiya**

Ushbu maqolada eski o‘zbek tili leksikasidagi yuz bergan fonetik transformatsiyalar, xususan, epenteza, metateza, assimilyatsiya, dissimilyatsiya va singarmonizm hodisalari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot davomida mumtoz adabiyot namunalari, jumladan, Alisher Navoiy asarlaridagi leksik birliklar hozirgi o‘zbek adabiy tili bilan qiyosiy o‘rganilgan. Arabcha va forscha o‘zlashmalarning turkiy talaffuzga moslashish qonuniyatlari hamda tovushlar o‘rin almashishining tarixiy sabablari ko‘rib chiqilgan.

**Kalit soʻzlar:** Eski o‘zbek tili, tarixiy fonetika, epenteza, metateza, assimilyatsiya, dissimilyatsiya, singarmonizm, fonetik transformatsiya, leksik qatlam.



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### **Аннотация**

В статье анализируются фонетические трансформации, произошедшие в лексиконе староузбекского языка, в частности, явления эпентезы, метатезы, ассимиляции, диссимиляции и сингармонизма. В ходе исследования были изучены примеры классической литературы, включая лексические единицы в произведениях Алишера Навои, в сравнительном контексте с современным узбекским литературным языком. В статье рассматриваются закономерности адаптации арабских и персидских заимствований к тюркскому произношению и исторические причины изменения звуковых позиций.

**Ключевые слова:** староузбекский язык, историческая фонетика, эпентеза, метатеза, ассимиляция, диссимиляция, сингармонизм, фонетическая трансформация, лексический слой.

World linguistics has long placed great emphasis on the origin of language. In particular, the Uzbek language has a rich historical development, and its current state is the result of centuries of changes in the phonetic system and the formation of literary norms. The historical phonetics of the Uzbek language plays an important role in linguistics, as it shows how the sound system of the language has developed.

From the XIV-XV centuries, the old Uzbek literary language began to form. The language was closely related to the written tradition of chigatoy. It was during this period that serious changes took place in the phonetic system of language. One of the main reasons for these changes is the increasing number of loanwords from Arabic and Persian, as well as the gradual weakening of synharmony, an internal law of Turkic languages. Epenthesis, metathesis, and other phenomena are of particular importance within these transformations as mechanisms for preserving the internal structure of the word and facilitating pronunciation.

Abdurauf Fitrat, a prominent figure in the Jadid movement, a writer, and a linguist, said: “The Old Uzbek language is one of the richest and most literary languages among the Turkic languages.” This sentence reflects respect for the national language, the richness and historical significance of the Old Uzbek language. Indeed, the phonetics of the Old Uzbek language was so rich that it attracted the attention of many foreign linguists.



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Phonetics is the branch of linguistics that studies the sounds of speech, their formation and application. Historical phonetics, on the other hand, studies the change in the sound system over time. This issue is especially relevant for the Uzbek language, since its phonetic system differs significantly from both the ancient Turkic basis and other modern Turkic languages.

The phonetics of the Uzbek language were shaped by internal linguistic processes, the cultural influence of Arabic and Persian, the development of dialects, and later the influence of the Russian language. As a result, the language gradually lost most of its ancient Turkic features, particularly syncretism.

### **Literature Analysis**

In his work "Old Uzbek Language", Abdurauf Fitrat calls phonetics the "living wealth" of the language and emphasizes how strong the phenomenon of singarmonism was in the Old Uzbek language. Russian linguist and Turkologist A.N. Kononov, on the other hand, succeeds in analyzing the connection between ancient Turkic monuments and the Old Uzbek language, in particular the evolution of consonants.

In deactology, a number of changes in the pronunciation of the sound system are observed.

For example,  $d \rightarrow y$ ,  $b \rightarrow m$ ,  $g \rightarrow \check{g}$ , etc. have been scientifically reconstructed. A.N.Kononov, in his work "Grammar of the Language of Turkic Runic Monuments of the 9th-10th Centuries," conducted a thorough analysis of the phonetic, morphological, and lexical features of the language of the Orkhon-Enasoy inscriptions of the 7th-9th centuries. At the same time, another Russian linguist, A.M. Sherbak studied the comparative phonetics of Turkic languages and showed the reasons for the change in the vowel system in the Uzbek language (the increase in unrounded vowels).

### **Research Methodology**

During the study, the recommendations of phonetic phenomena in the literature used and their historical significance were determined. In this, the comparative-historical method and the phonetic reconstruction method were widely used.

The language of the Orkhon-Enasoy inscriptions, ancient Uighur texts, and the works of Navoi was compared. In addition, we analyzed the phonetic differences between



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Old Turkic (7th–9th centuries) and Old Uzbek (14th–15th centuries) and their transformation into modern Uzbek, and A.N. Using Kononov's sources, ancient forms (adak, beg) were compared with modern forms (oyak, bek).

### **Research Results**

As a result of the research and analysis of sources, it was found that the Old Uzbek language has a unique complex phonetic structure. In particular, the main phonetic transformations that occurred under the influence of internal language laws and external borrowings can be grouped as follows:

**Singarmonism (Vowel harmony)**

In the Old Turkic language, the vowels were strictly harmonized according to the signs of the series and labialization.

For example: tegin (prince), bilge (wise), kagan (khan), bodun (people).

Although this phenomenon weakened as a result of the large influx of Arabic and Persian words into the language by the time of Alisher Navoi, singlarmonism retained its musicality in the pure Turkic layer. For example, in Navoi's works, vowel harmony in words such as "Owl", "Eye", "star" was much stronger than in the current language.

**Epenteza**

In Turkic languages, including Old Uzbek, the juxtaposition of two consonants at the end or in the middle of a word (consonant clusters) was considered awkward. Therefore, vowels were added to loanwords. For example: hukum – the insertion of a vowel between two voiceless consonants; fikir – to facilitate pronunciation, according to the Arabic original; sabir – to maintain the meter in classical poetry

**Metathesis (Sound Swapping)** – This phenomenon often involves the rearrangement of consonants to facilitate pronunciation.

For example, yog'mur – rain. Sound substitution occurs in ancient Turkic variants. For example: Turpoq – soil.

The phenomenon of word order, which is characteristic of dialects of the Uzbek language and the old literary language, occurs. It is observed that it is pronounced as "to teach" - "to teach".

**Assimilation (Similarity of sounds)**

A.N.As Kononov noted, the adaptation of adjacent sounds to each other was very active in the Old Uzbek language: Keldi → Ketti - voiced consonants were voiced under the influence of voiceless consonants.



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Unemployed → unemployed - a case of complete sound similarity has occurred.

Qagan → qaqan (khan/ruler) - a case of consonant assimilation has occurred.

Dissimilation (Non-similarity of sounds)

This is the opposite of assimilation, the separation of identical or similar sounds in pronunciation: Harm → zalan to avoid the juxtaposition of two "r" sounds (in some dialects and historical variants).

Attar → attor (attor/perfumer) – The vowels are far apart (as a result of the violation of synchronicism).

Processes such as epenthesis, metathesis, and assimilation are still actively used in our current living speech and dialects. For example, even today, in speech, the word "fikr" is pronounced as "fikr", and the word "hukm" is pronounced as "hukum".

Many words in our modern literary language have been preserved in their transformed form as a result of transformations (metathesis or assimilation) during the period of the Old Uzbek language (for example: soil, rain). There is also a tendency to adapt loanwords to Turkish pronunciation norms in both periods.

In the Old Uzbek language, the phenomenon of synchronicity (vowel harmony) was quite strong and ensured the musicality of words. In the modern Uzbek literary language, this law has almost disappeared, remaining only in some dialects. Unlike our current spelling rules, in the old Uzbek language (Arabic alphabet), epenthesis phenomena (for example: sabir, fikir) were often reflected in writing. In modern Uzbek, these words are written according to their original (patience, thought), but in pronunciation the old tradition is preserved.

## **Conclusion**

Phonetic transformations in the lexicon of the Old Uzbek language demonstrate the internal flexibility of the language. Epenthesis and metathesis adapted loanwords to the Turkic mold, while assimilation and dissimilation regulated changes in living speech. Studying these processes helps to understand the historical roots of the norms of the modern Uzbek literary language.

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