

Boise State University

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College of Arts and Sciences Poster  
Presentations

2010 Undergraduate Research and Scholarship  
Conference

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4-12-2010

## **Linguistic Features of Uzbek**

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## Linguistic Features of Uzbek

### Abstract

This poster provides a preliminary description of the linguistic features of Uzbek, the official language of Uzbekistan. Uzbek is characterized as an Eastern Turkic language within the Altaic language family and, although it is spoken by over 18 million people around the world, it is highly under-documented in linguistic literature. Over the course of a semester, our group met with a native speaker of Uzbek to document the phonological, morphological, and syntactic features of the language. This analysis, along with recordings made by our group, serves the greater linguistic community by providing theoretical linguists with new language data to support their research.

### Authors

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# Linguistic Features of Uzbek

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## 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?

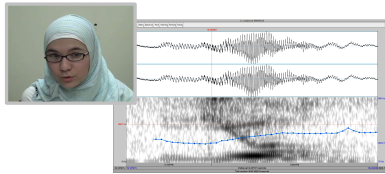
- Students apply linguistic topics and theories learned in other courses by documenting the distinct linguistic features of a language other than English.
- By recording elicitation sessions, the recordings will be made available for further analysis by linguists around the world.

### 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	futbol	oɪnimman
<i>I</i>	<b>soccer</b>	<b>play</b>
b:zɛ	futbol	oɪnjimas
<i>we</i>	<b>soccer</b>	<b>play</b>
san	futbol	oɪnisan
<i>you</i>	<b>soccer</b>	<b>play</b>
silɛ	futbol	oɪnisiɛ
<i>you (plural)</i>	<b>soccer</b>	<b>play</b>
u	futbol	oɪnida
<i>he/she/it</i>	<b>soccer</b>	<b>play</b>
ula	futbol	oɪnijada
<i>they</i>	<b>soccer</b>	<b>play</b>

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 musikasn iʃtadɛ]  
*he/she/it* rock music listen (3<sup>rd</sup> pers.sg.)  
**subject** object verb
- [rɔk musikasn iʃtadɛ]  
rock music listens (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 musikasn iʃtadɛ]  
*he/she/it* rock music **acc.marker** listen (3<sup>rd</sup> pers.sg.)  
subject object verb  
*'he listens to rock music'*
- [musika mangan ilgom beradi]  
rock music to me inspiration it gives (3<sup>rd</sup> 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
<b>Plosive</b>	p b	t d			k g q	ʔ	
<b>Nasal</b>	m	n			ŋ		
<b>Trill</b>		r					
<b>Fricative</b>	ɸ β	s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ	χ ʁ	h
<b>Affricate</b>			tʃ dʒ				
<b>Approximant</b>				j			
<b>Lateral Approximant</b>		l					

- Voiced consonants undergo devoicing in word-final position:  
[kʊs] 'eye' → [kʊzlar] '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

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