

Comparative Analysis of Phonetic, Lexical, And Grammatical Differences Between Standard Korean And Uzbek Languages and Their Dialects

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Abstract: This research examines how Standard Korean differs from regional dialects within Korea from phonetic, lexical, and grammatical perspectives, and provides a comparative analysis of how similar phenomena are manifested in the relationship between Standard Uzbek and Uzbek dialects. In addition, the study briefly discusses the hypothesis that the Korean language may be related to the Altaic language family, and provides several illustrative examples.

Keywords: Phonetics, lexicon, grammar, dialect, standard language, Altaic language family.

Introduction: we compare standard language norms with certain features of regional dialects. For the sake of clarity, examples from the Uzbek language are also provided. From a phonetic aspect, one of the most notable phenomena is sound alternation. In the Gangwon dialect, the vowel “아 (a)” is often pronounced similarly to “어 (eo)”. For example, the standard form “좋아” may be realized as “좋어”. In the Chungcheong dialect, it is observed that the vowel “오 (o)” shifts to “우 (u)”, and “요 (yo)” changes to “유 (yu)”, as in 가요 → 가유. Another example can be found in the Gyeongsang dialect, where the word “예쁘다” is pronounced as “이쁘다”. A similar phenomenon can also be observed in Uzbek dialects; however, in Uzbek linguistics this is referred to as dissimilation. That is, it involves the transformation of similar sounds within a word into dissimilar ones. This phenomenon typically occurs in words containing the sonorant consonants l, r, and n. For example, in some dialectal variations we observe phonetic changes such

as zərər – zələl, devər – dəvəl – devəl, əndjir – əndjil, and roməl – yoməl . In addition, in many regions of Uzbekistan, particularly in Tashkent, Bukhara, and Kashkadarya provinces, the forms man and san are used instead of the standard men and sen. Sound addition (epenthesis). In the Pyongan dialect, the word 여름 (“summer”) is pronounced as 너름, and 일곱 (“seven”) appears as 닐곱 . In Uzbekistan, especially in the Samarqand and Urgut regions, similar phonetic phenomena involving sound addition are frequently observed, for instance: bank → banka, stakan → istakan. Sound omission (elision). In the Gangwon dialect, the consonant “ㅅ” is often pronounced as the simpler “ㅈ”, resulting in forms such as 씨름 → 시름 . In the Korean language, dialects that involve widespread phoneme deletion are relatively rare; instead, grammatical contraction is more common. In contrast, Uzbek dialects exhibit such phonetic reductions very frequently, appearing in nearly all dialect groups, for example: ovqat → aqot, aytmoq → etmoq. As shown above, in Korean dialects, sound alternation and sound addition occur more frequently

compared to Uzbek. This also suggests that Koreans, unlike Uzbeks, tend to pronounce words with more prolonged articulation.

Lexical aspect. Humans naturally tend to seek the easiest way of communication—that is, minimizing difficulty in pronunciation and expressing ideas quickly using fewer words. It is possible that this tendency contributed to the emergence of dialects. Lexical divergence from the standard language refers to cases where a word in the literary language is either completely or partially replaced by a different form in dialects. Such differences are often related to the ethnic composition of the population in a given region and, in some cases, even to the cultural life of the community living there. For example, 콩: 콩밥(콩밥) 강: 강밥(강밥) 맨: 맨조밥(강조밥) 메: 메조이(메조) 올: 올베(올벼) 찰: 찰지장(찰기장) 늦: 늦감재(늦감자) 들: 들깨(들깨) 참: 참드륵(참두릅) 풋: 풋고치(풋고추) 막: 막국수(막국수) 통: 통김치(통김치) 생: 생밤(생밤) 햇: 햇사과(햇사과).

Korean linguists Go Young-geun and Koo Bon-kwan argue that, as illustrated in the examples above, these prefixes are often combined with words referring to grains or livestock. They further note that this phenomenon is closely associated with traditional agricultural life in rural communities. Lexical units characteristic of Korean dialects differ partially or entirely from those of the standard language. For instance, in the Gyeongsang dialect, the word for “mother” is 어무이, whereas in Standard Korean it is 어머니. This represents a partial lexical variation. In the Uzbek context, in the Surkhandarya region, the word suvoq is used as shubaq, and supurgi is used as shipirtki. In the Jeju dialect of Korean, the term for “green onion” is 패마농, whereas in the standard language it is 파. Similarly, the word for “garlic” in this dialect is 대사니, while in Standard Korean it is 마늘. This represents a case of complete lexical substitution. In Uzbek, similar phenomena can also be observed: in the Surkhandarya region, qovoq is used as kadi, and doira is used as dap. Likewise, in the Khorezm region, aka is used in the form og’a. These dialectal forms represent

significant deviations from the standard language.

Grammatical aspect. Grammatically, dialectal variation refers to the omission, addition, or substitution of grammatical affixes within spoken language. In nearly all Korean dialects, sentence-final particles differ significantly from those in the standard language. For example, in the Jeju dialect, the polite sentence-ending particle -요 is realized as -브서: 어서 오십시오 becomes 혼저 옵서, and 오세요 becomes 옵서. In some southern Korean dialects, the future tense marker 겠 in the standard language is replaced by forms such as 갓/갓/겻: for example, 안 하겠다 becomes 안 하겻다. Similarly, in certain Uzbek dialects, the locative case marker -da is replaced by the dative marker -ga, as in the expression magazinni qoshiga saqlang.

Below, I will present an observation I made regarding Standard Korean and Uzbek dialectal usage. However, I will first discuss the question of which language family Korean actually belongs to. Various scholars have conducted studies on the hypothesis that the Korean language belongs to the Altaic language family. In general, proponents of the Altaic theory attempt to group together the Turkic languages of Central and Western Asia, the Mongolic languages preserved in present-day Mongolia, the Manchu-Tungusic languages (spoken by stateless or minority communities), and Korean and Japanese (including the Japonic languages, sometimes also including Ainu). In this classification, there are more than 60 languages in total, spoken by approximately 250 million people. The possibility of the Altaic theory was first proposed in 1849 by Schott, who grouped the Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages under the term “Tatar.” Although Schott used the term “Altaic,” it was originally employed in the 19th century within the broader context of the Ural-Altaic hypothesis. Later, Castrén (1862) expressed similar ideas, but he classified Turkic languages within the Uralic family. In 1857, Anton Boller proposed including Korean and Japanese in this group as well.

In the 1920s, Korean linguists Ramstedt (G. J. Ramstedt) and Polivanov (E. D. Polivanov), and later in the 1950s Poppe (N. Poppe), compared large sets of lexical items and proposed the Altaic language

hypothesis. Samuel Martin (1966) compared Japanese (including Ainu) with Korean and examined their possible genetic relationship. Roy Andrew Miller (1971) argued that Japanese languages are related not only to Korean but also to the broader Altaic family. His hypothesis was further developed by scholars such as Sergei Starostin. Although not widely accepted, scholars such as Street (1962) and Patrie (1982) attempted to connect the Ainu language with the Altaic family. However, later research has tended to classify Ainu as being closer to the Austroasiatic languages.

The Altaic hypothesis has faced significant criticism. Opponents argue that shared features such as vowel harmony and the absence of grammatical gender are merely typological similarities rather than evidence of genetic relationship. Although proponents such as Ramstedt (1916), Poppe, Martin, and Starostin have presented lexical correspondences, they have not been able to establish systematic sound correspondence rules comparable to those found in Indo-European linguistics. Therefore, critics explain these similarities as the result of long-term borrowing and mutual linguistic influence. In other words, similarities among Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages are largely attributed to prolonged contact and interaction among their speakers.

Since the 1950s, the Altaic hypothesis has been actively discussed in South Korea, and many linguists have supported it, making critical perspectives relatively difficult to express. However, in Europe, scholars such as Clauson, Doerfer (1963), Bernard Comrie (1981), and many younger linguists do not consider Altaic to be a valid genetic language family, instead treating it as consisting of three or more independent language families. In the 20th century, after Ramstedt's research, the inclusion of Korean within the Altaic family was sometimes metaphorically described as "an orphan being adopted into a new family." However, due to insufficient historical evidence, this hypothesis has not been conclusively proven and is currently viewed with considerable skepticism in international academic circles. Nevertheless, in South Korean historiographical traditions, the Ural-Altaic hypothesis—popular until the 19th century—is still sometimes accepted, and the idea that "Korean belongs to the Ural-Altaic language family" is recorded in the introductory sections of national history textbooks. As a result, historical

misconceptions in this regard are still observed. In some 20th-century publications, one may also find statements claiming that "Korean belongs to the Altaic language family." However, if this is presented cautiously, it is more accurate to state that "if the Altaic hypothesis is accepted, then Korean may be considered part of this language family."

Currently, organizations dealing with Altaic studies continue to operate in South Korea, regularly holding meetings and publications with linguists working in this field. However, these activities are generally focused not on proving the genetic validity of the Altaic hypothesis, but rather on comparative linguistics and the study of individual languages. As shown above, many scholars have argued for the classification of Korean within the Altaic family, particularly alongside Turkic languages. However, this view has not been confirmed by other branches of linguistics. Similarities between Korean and Turkic languages are often explained as the result of historical cultural and trade relations between the two regions. The example we present below may similarly have arisen through historical trade and cultural contacts between Korean-speaking and Turkic-speaking peoples, or it may later serve as a minor piece of evidence contributing to the discussion of Korean's possible affiliation with the Altaic family. This example concerns the relationship between Standard Korean and Uzbek dialects. Since this research focuses on the standard norms of the Korean language and the distinctive features of dialects, a comparative method with Uzbek is necessary. The meanings of the Korean standard expressions 찾아가다 and 찾아오다 are similarly reflected in Uzbek dialectal usage. In Uzbek dialects, these expressions correspond to meanings such as "to search," "to go looking for someone," and "to come in search of someone," which differ from the standard Uzbek equivalents "to visit" or "to go see someone." The Korean standard expression 찾아가다/찾아오다 is often considered synonymous with 방문하다, which clearly supports this interpretation. For example, the sentence 저는 할머니 댁에 찾아가다 ("I went to my grandmother's house") in Standard Korean corresponds to the dialectal Uzbek expression "Men buvimnikiga qidirib bordim" ("I went looking for my grandmother at her house"). This dialectal usage is

especially common in the Jizzakh region of Uzbekistan (еттаре бѣза къдѣремъз, сѣн уида отърасон). In the 2008 Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, one of the meanings of qidirmoq (“to search”) is also given as “to travel or wander,” with the example: “Sayr etib-qidirib, dunyoni kezib...” (“Wandering and searching, traveling the world...”). However, this meaning does not fully correspond to the dialectal usage described above.

In the preceding sections, several dialectal features have been examined. In conclusion, through such comparative approaches, it is possible to facilitate the teaching of Korean to Uzbek learners. When learners encounter similarities between a foreign language and their native language, such information is retained more easily and for a longer period than other forms of memorization, as has been demonstrated in pedagogical studies. Moreover, since most Uzbek learners study Korean for the purpose of studying or working in Korea, learning dialectal forms in advance plays an important role in facilitating communication with native speakers.

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