

# Description of Research on The Qarluq Dialects of Surkhandarya

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**Received:** 25 April 2025; **Accepted:** 21 May 2025; **Published:** 23 June 2025

**Abstract:** This article discusses the classification of Surkhandarya dialects from Uzbek folk dialects and their certain phonetic, lexical, morphological, word-formation, and syntactic differences. Information is also provided on the work of our linguists who have worked on the Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects.

**Keywords:** Dialectology, qarluq-chigil, dialect, o'guz, kipchak, literary language, national language, dialect, classification.

**Introduction:** Dialects can rightfully be called a rich treasure that forms part of every nation's national language. Indeed, they may differ from the national literary language in several aspects-such as their phonetic, lexical, and grammatical features -but the true values, rich heritage, and expressive nuances of a people's language are preserved in their dialects, passed down orally from generation to generation over the centuries. A dialect is considered a form of the national language, and the literary language develops and becomes refined by drawing nourishment from these dialects.

The Uzbek literary language is enriched by the dialects of the Uzbek people; however, they differ from one another in certain phonetic, lexical, morphological, word-formation, and syntactic aspects. In modern Uzbek linguistics, the contributions of Russian Turkologists such as I. I. Zarubin,

E. D. Polivanov, K. K. Yudakhin, B. B. Reshetov, and A. K. Borovkov, as well as prominent Uzbek dialectologists like G'ozil Olim Yunusov, Sh. Sh. Shoabdurakhmonov, F. Abdullayev, Kh. Doniyorov, B. Jo'rayev, A.S. Shermatov, A. Jo'rayev, and A. To'raqulov, have been invaluable in solidifying this field of dialectology [1]. Along with these scholars, other linguists such as S. Rahimov, Q. Muhammadjonov, Sh. Nosirov, T. Sodiqov, I. Rajabov, V. Egamov, T. Gudratov, A. Aliyev, M. Mirzayev, E.

Sheraliyev, and A. Shermatov have also made significant contributions to the study of the lexical features of Uzbek dialects. The study of Uzbek dialects has been divided into two main areas:

1. General classification of dialects (from a national or cross-country perspective);
2. Specific descriptions of dialects (within a particular oasis or region).

Zarubin classified Uzbek dialects into four major groups:

1. Khiva,
2. Fergana,
3. Tashkent,
4. Samarkand-Bukhara.

Yudakhin, while analyzing the relationships between various Uzbek dialects and the Tajik language, paid special attention to the phenomenon of synharmonism. Building upon Zarubin's classification, he added the Kipchak-influenced dialect group and the Northern Uzbek dialects. However, the Samarkand-Bukhara dialects were not examined in detail[2]. Later, the classification of Uzbek dialects was expanded into five groups:

1. Tashkent, 2. Fergana, 3. Kipchak, 4. Khiva (including Oghuz features),

## 5. Northern Uzbek dialects.

The Boysun dialect, for instance, was included in the Kipchak group[3].

Professor E. D. Polivanov conducted one of the most detailed analyses and classifications of Uzbek dialects. In his classification, he described not only the dialectal differences but also examined cases of *mestizaje* (intermingling of languages) and hybridization (cross-language influences). He distinguished between Iranianized dialects (such as those of Samarkand and Bukhara) and non-Iranianized dialects (such as the Kipchak dialects of the Fergana region).

Polivanov classified Iranian-influenced dialects into seven types:

Type 1: Samarkand–Bukhara dialects

Type 2: Tashkent dialects

Type 3: Kokand–Margilan dialect

Type 4: Andijan–Shakhrihan dialects

Type 5: Uyghur dialects (e.g., Namangan, Chartak)

Type 6: Northern Uzbek urban dialects

Type 7: Northern Uzbek rural dialects [4].

Since 1936, building on Polivanov's classification, Professor G'ozī Olim Yunusov a prominent Uzbek scholar proposed a classification of Uzbek dialects into three main groups:

1. Uzbek-kipchak dialect group: Spoken by the population of regions such as Zarafshan, Bukhara, Samarkand, Qashqadaryo, and Surxondaryo. Additionally, dialects of Uzbeks living in Khorezm, Andijan, Namangan, Kokand, Chimboy, Qo'ng'iro't, as well as northern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan, are included in this group.

2. Turki-barlos dialect group: Includes the dialects spoken in cities like Tashkent, Kokand, Namangan, Andijan, and Margilan.

3. Khiva-urganch dialect group: Includes the dialects spoken by the populations of Khiva, Khanka, Kat, Tashhovuz, Old and New Urgench.

Professor G'ozī Olim Yunusov also highlighted a distinctive feature of the Khiva dialect - the preservation of synharmonism, notably the replacement of the phoneme "q" with "k".

Meanwhile, Professor A. K. Borovkov classified Uzbek dialects into two major phonetic groups: The recipient (receptive) group, The o-pronouncing (a-payer) group [5]. Borovkov identified four representative groups within Uzbek dialects:

1. Intermediate Uzbek dialect

2. Shaybani Uzbek dialect (also referred to as the

j-pronouncing group)

3. Southern Khorezm dialect

4. A Separate group of Uzbek dialects [6].

## Literature review

Although initial classifications of Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects can be found in the works of scholars such as E. D. Polivanov and A. K. Borovkov, the first practical and systematic study of the region's dialects was carried out by the linguist A. Mahmatqulov. He was the first scholar to conduct scientific research specifically on the "jo'qchilar" dialect spoken in the Sherabad district. In 1960, he visited Sherabad to collect field data and later defended a dissertation on this dialect.

His research revealed specific features of the Sherabad "j-pronouncing" (j-lovchi) dialects, including the existence of a distinct demonstrative category and a well-developed plural formation system. His studies were published in scientific outlets such as the "Masalalar" (Issues of Uzbek Linguistics) journal, Issue 4, (1960), where articles like "Verbal Forms in the Dialect of Sherabad's Jo'qchilar" and "On the Consonant System in the Dialect of the Sherabad Jo'qchilar" attracted considerable attention at the time and were regarded as important contributions to Uzbek dialectology.

One of the leading scholars who extensively studied the Surkhandarya dialects is Saidmuro Rakhimov. His candidate dissertation was specifically dedicated to the study of the lexicon of Uzbek dialects in the Surkhandarya region. As noted in the introduction of his work, although Uzbek dialectology had made considerable progress in researching the phonetic and morphological features of dialects, the lexical aspect had not received adequate attention.

The introductory part of his dissertation provides historical information about the population of Surkhandarya province, as well as some general characteristics of its dialects. The main body of his research focuses on analyzing typical lexical units of Surkhandarya dialects, grouped according to semantic and morphological features.

In his classification, Rakhimov divided Surkhandarya dialects into two primary groups [7]:

1. "Y-pronouncing" (urban-type) dialects,

2. "J-pronouncing" Kipchak dialects.

It is important to note that among the dialects studied, there are also "Y-pronouncing" Kipchak dialects and "J-pronouncing" dialects, which contain a number of lexical units that do not align with the standard Uzbek literary language. These include regional words and expressions that are absent from literary usage, but

actively used in the speech of local communities. For example, words such as *adag'*, *adaq*, *tom*, which are attested in the dialects of Surkhandarya but are either not used or used differently in the literary language.

Rakhimov also examined how some lexemes preserved in the dialects correspond to terms found in ancient written monuments, but are no longer used in modern standard Uzbek. This highlights the historical depth and continuity preserved in these dialects.

One of the most valuable aspects of Rakhimov's research is his documentation of nearly forty lexical units-such as *morin*, *marin* (horse), *alang* (flame), *bee*, *arasichi* (beekeeper)-that exist in Surkhandarya dialects and other Turkic languages, yet lack direct equivalents in the literary Uzbek language. This underscores the richness and uniqueness of the regional dialects and their significance for Turkic linguistics more broadly.

The second part of Saidmurod Rakhimov's dissertation focuses on the morphological structure of dialectal words found in Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects. In this section, he analyzes both lexemes that have parallels in the standard Uzbek literary language-such as *dap* (circle), *kadi* (pumpkin), or (middle), *tati* (nothing)-and those that lack direct literary equivalents, like *xabachak*, *kovachach*, and *xabichak*, which all carry the meaning of "skin". These non-standard words are examined as integral parts of the regional lexicon.

Rakhimov also explores compound and derived terms that are typical of the dialect, offering detailed morphological analysis. These dialectal expressions are significant not only linguistically but also culturally, as they reflect unique aspects of the local worldview and history.

The classification of Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects has long been a subject of interest among scholars. According to Professor E. D. Polivanov's classification [8], the Surkhandarya dialects are placed in the third major dialect group of Uzbek-the Kipchak dialect group, and more specifically within the fifth subtype, which he terms the Southern Uzbek "j-pronouncing" group.

Polivanov's approach pays particular attention to the presence or absence of vowel harmony (synharmonism) as a key feature in classifying Uzbek dialects. From this phonological perspective, Surkhandarya dialects exhibit characteristics that align them with the Kipchak or "pure Uzbek" dialect group, as they preserve several features of synharmonism.

On the other hand, Professor A. K. Borovkov offered a different perspective by focusing more on the historical and structural relationships between dialects, rather than strictly phonetic criteria. In his classification, he identifies the Surkhandarya dialects as belonging to the

"j-pronouncing" dialect group, without necessarily emphasizing vowel harmony or historical-linguistic divergence.

Speakers of this dialect have been residing in various regions of Uzbekistan since the 16th century, including northern Khorezm, Samarkand, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya provinces, and parts of the Fergana Valley, as well as in southwestern areas of Tajikistan.

In classifying Uzbek dialects, Professor G'ozil Yunusov placed significant emphasis on phonetic and morphological features. According to his classification, the Uzbek-kipchak dialect group includes speakers residing in a wide range of regions: Ahangaron valley, Mirzachul, the Samarkand and Zarafshan areas, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, and Surkhandarya, as well as in Khorezm, Andijan, Kokand, Namangan, Karakalpakstan, and the Chimboy and Kungirotdistricts. Additionally, Uzbek dialects spoken in parts of Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan are also considered part of this Kipchak group.

## METHODOLOGY

Professor Yunusov devoted particular attention to urban-type dialects, especially those known as "snoring" dialects (*burunli shevalar*), and conducted in-depth research into their dialectological features. Alongside these, he also included Kipchak dialects in his studies and produced numerous scholarly works analyzing their structures and usage patterns.

In the broader context of Uzbek dialectology, Academician V. V. Reshetov acknowledged the presence of unique ethnolinguistic processes within the current territory of Uzbekistan. He considered both mutual and non-mutual influences between the languages of closely related and unrelated peoples. From a historical-linguistic perspective, Reshetov identified three major dialectal groups within the Uzbek language:

1. Karluk-Uyghur,
2. Kipchak,
3. Oghuz.

These groupings reflect both linguistic lineage and sociohistorical developments that shaped the modern distribution of Uzbek dialects across Central Asia.

In classifying Uzbek dialects, Uzbek scholars take into account territorial distribution, ethnic characteristics, and linguistic features. Based on this approach, Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects are classified as part of the northwestern group in terms of geography, as Kipchak in terms of ethnic origin, and as part of the "j"-group dialects based on linguistic characteristics. The Kipchak dialect group is one of the most widespread across a vast area. Representatives of these dialects can

be found in almost all regions of Uzbekistan, particularly in Sirdarya, Samarkand, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, and Khorezm provinces, where a significant portion of the population speaks a Kipchak variety.

Moreover, it is not limited to Uzbekistan. Kipchak dialects of the Uzbek language are also spoken in parts of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, emphasizing their broad geographical spread.

Academician V. V. Reshetov identified several distinctive phonetic features of Kipchak dialects. Among these are:

- The contrast between paired vowels (such as oo', y-i, ae),
- The preservation of vowel harmony (synharmonism),
- The tendency for diphthongization of mid-high vowels at the beginning of words (e.g., i > ie, u > uo, ü > üe),
- The lack of clear distinction between short and long vowels,
- Sound changes such as initial y becoming j, and final y changing to v,
- Verbal forms like mag'on, sag'an, and ug'an representing past actions,
- The use of the auxiliary verb jatir in the present continuous tense,
- And the adjectival form of the present-future tense appearing as dam.

These phonological and morphological characteristics serve as key identifiers of Kipchak dialects within the broader spectrum of Uzbek language variation.

## RESULTS

As the classifications reviewed show, all Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects are generally included within the "j"-group Kipchak dialects. These are considered a structural branch of the larger Kipchak dialect group. S. Rakhimov, in his analysis of j-lovchi (j-speaking) Uzbek dialects, identifies the following morphological features: "In villages such as Minor, Boymoqli, Gorjak, and Kallamozor, when verb affixes indicating the plural second person are used, they consistently appear in forms such as aq, iner, ner. For example: boraq, boriner, borner ('you go', plural form)." [9]

This phenomenon reflects the local morphological tendencies and confirms the observations made by other scholars who have studied dialects in the region.

Despite the above, S. Rakhimov notes the following caution in his dialectological analysis. "Of course, this view is accurate, but we must also recognize the

presence of other dialects in the region." [10]

This highlights a crucial point emphasized by many Uzbek linguists: the linguistic landscape of the Surkhandarya region cannot be considered homogenous. The dialects spoken across the area are diverse and do not form a single unified dialect system.

Based on this understanding, S. Rakhimov proposes the following classification of Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects:

1. j-payer Uzbek dialects – dialects typical of the Kipchak group;
2. y-payer Uzbek dialects – dialects typical of the Karluk group;
3. Bilingual (mixed) dialects – dialects shaped by language contact and dual linguistic influence. [12]

Although j-payer Uzbek dialects are generally grouped together based on shared linguistic features, they do not constitute a fully uniform dialect group across the Surkhandarya region. S. Rakhimov emphasizes that even within Kipchak-type dialects, there are internal divisions. He classifies these dialects into two main subgroups.

The first group includes dialects spoken in the southwestern and northwestern parts of Surkhandarya. The following villages and residential areas are identified as representative of this subgroup:

Boysun district: Rabot, Yomchi, Pitov, Kofrun, Bandixon, Karagan, Tuda, Khojabulgan, Munchak, Tillakamar, Chilonzor, Kallamozor, Gorjak, Khojaolkan, Dashtigoz, Pulhokim, Pudina, Sarkamish, Tangimush, Khomkon, Padang, Besherkak.

Jarkurgan district: Minor, Oktepa, Ismoiltepa, Kyzylmozor, Cho'pon, Quyun, Boymoqli, Chinabad.

Qumkurgan district: Azlarsoy, Elbayan (now part of the Salter area), Yantokli, Achamoyli, Korsakli, Khojamulki, Zarkam, Lalmikor, Yangiyer, Boston, Guliston, Qumkurgan, Sayhon, Paypan, Pakhtakor, Ulus.

Angor district: Tallimaron, Takiya, Gilambob, Angor.

Sherobod district: Kulliqsho, Gorjak, Khojakiya, Chukurkul, Talashqon, Yangiyul, Gorin, Achamoyli, Loyliq, Gambur, Tuguz, Aqqurgan, Bobotepa.

Termez district: Dehqan, Ozod, Yangiarik.

Muzrabot district: Beshqotan.

In the dialects of this group, one of the key phonetic features is the strong presence of synharmonism (also known as vowel harmony). The root and affix in a word harmonize in terms of softness or hardness (palatalization), which influences morphological construction. For example, in this group, vowel substitutions reflect phonological simplification or transformation:

Munayaqqa – “to go there,” jarteke – a local form for “joke” or playful speech.

Lip-rounded vowels like (u) or (i) are often replaced with unrounded sounds such as (y) or a non-palatalized (i), e.g.: not possible > yoqmasli (slurred local form)

shipirtki > shivirki (broom), shubak – a local word for “plaster.”

These examples reflect the unique phonetic and lexical identity of the first group of j-payer Kipchak dialects in the Surkhandarya region.

The second subgroup of Kipchak-type dialects in Surkhandarya is found predominantly in the northeastern part of the province. The dialects of this group are spoken in the following villages and districts: Uzun region (previously Asia district): Chimildiq, Boybori, Bakati, Konikon, Fayzabad, Aqostana, Kurgancha, Bobotog, Malik, Aqmasjid, Toltoqay, Khursan, Galamulla, Qolmaykan, Jarabad.

Denov district: Change, Aktash, Yaniqishlok, Baxt, Shamolli, Eshakoldi, Zartepa, Chuqurkishlok, Saksontepa, Galaba, Hayrabod, Kyzylsuv.

Shorchi district: Ipoq, Mominqul, Obishir, Mirshodi (now part of the Golden Sea territory, including Abodan, Qatagan, and Kyzylgul).

According to the researcher, while synharmonism (vowel harmony) is generally preserved in these dialects, there are notable deviations and phonetic simplifications in certain areas.

Key linguistic features of this group include:

Substitution of initial /j/ with /y/: This process is frequent at the beginning of words. For example: jenze → yazna (meaning “pochcha” – brother-in-law),

jamaq → yamaq (a kind of patch or basin).

Absence or alteration of /j/ in words that contain it in the literary Uzbek language: Words like jun (wool) or jo’ja (chick) often appear in modified or absent forms in these dialects.

Incomplete influence of synharmonism on verb formations: Verb structures such as bor-ken (“we went”) and keladi (“he/she will come”) demonstrate that vowel harmony does not fully apply to grammatical components, suggesting a reduced morphological regularity compared to other dialects.

Agreement and alignment inconsistencies: The dialects exhibit irregularities in subject-object agreement and verb conjugation, particularly in focus and aspectual forms, as well as in motion verbs involving directionality (e.g., arrival vs. departure).

These linguistic phenomena further demonstrate that while this group still belongs to the broader Kipchak

dialect family, it is distinct in several phonological and morphological features, and exhibits transitional traits possibly influenced by neighboring dialects or bilingual environments. According to S. Rakhimov, the Y-payer dialects (Karluk-type dialects) of Surkhandarya are divided into two distinct groups:

1. Termez-Sariosiya group
2. Khatak-Khonim group[13]

These dialects are primarily located in the northern part of Surkhandarya province. The territorial distribution of Y-payer dialect representatives includes: Sariosiya district: Dashnobod, Karasuv, Khokim, Uzun, Vardisoy, Turkqishloq, Gazarak.

Denov district: Vakhshivor (currently within the Golden Sea territory of Sho’rchi district).

Sho’rchi district: Snow (now part of Altinsoy district).

Sherabad district: Khatak, Laylagon, Khujand, Maidan, Karabakh, Navbog’, Chig’atoy.

Termez and surrounding rural regions.

From an ethnolinguistic perspective, the speakers of this dialect group are associated with various Turkic tribes such as the Barlos, Chigatoy, Qatagan, and Elbegi, which have influenced the phonetic and lexical features of these dialects.

Interestingly, some subdialects—especially those spoken in villages like Khatak, Laylagon, and Khujandko—share several phonological similarities with dialects spoken in Lower Kashkadarya, particularly regarding the realization of the vowel “g”, suggesting a regional convergence or transitional linguistic zone [14].

## CONCLUSION

Based on the literature reviewed, it is evident that the Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects have attracted significant scholarly attention. In particular, S. Rakhimov’s research stands out for providing a systematic and detailed classification of these dialects. His three-part classification offers an in-depth understanding of the phonetic, morphological, and lexical features specific to the region, distinguishing between j-payer (Kipchak), y-payer (Karluk), and bilingual speaker dialects. His work, along with the studies of A. Mamatkulov and H. Alimurodov, demonstrates that Surkhandarya dialects are not uniform but consist of various localized subdialects with unique linguistic features.

It is also apparent that earlier works by E.D. Polivanov, A.K. Borovkov, G.O. Yusupov, and V.V. Reshetov have laid a foundational classification of Uzbek dialects by considering phonetic laws, such as synharmonism, and historical-ethnographic factors. These classifications placed Surkhandarya dialects within the Kipchak group,

often identifying them by their distinctive use of the "j" and "y" phonemes.

Given the complexity and richness of the Surkhandarya Uzbek dialects, further research is both necessary and promising. Future studies should focus on:

**Lexical Grouping:** A more thorough analysis of dialectal vocabulary based on semantic, morphological, and functional characteristics.

**Phonetic and Morphological Variation:** A detailed investigation of phonetic shifts (such as j/y alternation) and morphological markers across villages and districts.

**Dialect Geography:** Mapping the geographical distribution of specific dialect features across Surkhandarya and neighboring regions.

**Comparative Studies:** Placing Surkhandarya dialects in comparison with other Uzbek dialects and Turkic languages to trace etymological and structural similarities.

**Compilation of Dialect Dictionaries:** Expanding upon S. Rakhimov's Surkhandarya Dialect Dictionary to include newly identified lexemes and local usages.

Works such as *The Sherabad Farmers' Dialect* by A. Mamatkulov, *Morphology of Southern Surkhandarya Kipchak Dialects* by H. Alimurodov, and *Lexicon of Surkhandarya Uzbek Dialects* by S. Rakhimov are key references and serve as a solid base for these future explorations. Continued scholarly engagement in this area will not only enrich Uzbek dialectology but also contribute to the broader field of Turkic linguistics.

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