

The History of the Goycha Region and the Lexical Structure of the Region's Dialects

Sakina Adil kyzy Aliyeva ¹

¹ *Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, Institute of Linguistics named after Nasimi*
115 H. Cavid Avenu, Baku, Azerbaijan

DOI: [10.22178/pos.104-45](https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.104-45)

LCC Subject Category: PE1001-1693

Received 21.04.2024

Accepted 25.05.2024

Published online 31.05.2024

Corresponding Author:
seliyeva90@gmail.com

© 2024 The Author. This article
is licensed under a [Creative Commons
Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) 

Abstract. The Azerbaijani language, one of the richest languages in the world, holds a unique place among Turkic languages. Azerbaijani belongs to the Oghuz group of Turkic languages, including Turkish, Gagauz, and Turkmen. However, Turkish is the closest language to ours in terms of both literary and everyday vocabulary. The research aims to deepen our understanding of the Goycha region's linguistic landscape and contribute to preserving and documenting the region's unique linguistic and cultural legacy within the broader context of Azerbaijani language and identity. There are numerous similarities between Turkish and the dialects of Western Azerbaijan, including the Goycha region, the ancient homeland of Azerbaijanis (Oghuz Turks). These similarities are evident in the Azerbaijani literary and dialectal languages. Azerbaijani language has a wide range of expressions and deep nuances of meaning, allowing it to convey human emotions and thoughts easily. The words used in the Azerbaijani language, literary or dialectal, have historical roots. The innovative aspects of this research lie in its integrative approach, original insights into the Goycha region's dialects, and contributions to the preservation and documentation of the historical and cultural legacy of Western Azerbaijan within the broader context of Azerbaijani language and identity.

Keywords: Goycha region; dialect; idiolect; Western Azerbaijan; Azerbaijani language.

INTRODUCTION

Goycha region was one of the regions of the Iravan Khanate. The areas surrounding Lake Goycha were part of this region. In other words, the region's boundaries encompassed the Agmag, Gozaldara, and Shahdag ranges. The region's name appears as Goychay region in Armenian and Russian sources. Goycha region was considered the largest region of the Iravan Khanate in terms of area and population. This region included the villages of Tokhludzha, Agbulag, Shordzha, Ardanysh, and Dzhil, located in the present-day Chambarak (Krasnoselo) district of Armenia, as well as the areas of Basarkechar (Vardenis), Qaranlyg (Martuni), and Kavar (Kamo) districts. The region had 59 villages, and except for two villages (81 Armenians in Bashkand and 9 Armenians in Zarkand), all the villages were inhabited by 5607 Azerbaijanians (99 families) until the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828. After the occupation of

the Iravan Khanate by Russia, following the Russo-Iranian and Russo-Turkish wars (1828-1830), 8557 Armenians (1485 families) were resettled from the Turkish provinces of Bitlis, Alashkert, Mush, Samsun, and Bayazid to the Goycha region. The resettled Armenians were primarily located in the Kavar (Kamo) and Qaranlyq (Martuni) districts.

This research is relevant because it explores the historical connections between the dialects of the Goycha region and the Azerbaijani and Turkish languages. Studying the dialects of the Goycha region in Azerbaijani compared to Turkish allows for the conclusion that the similarities between these languages are not coincidental. Comparing the lexicon, phonetics, and other idiosyncrasies of the Goycha region's dialects provides clear evidence that the inhabitants of Western Azerbaijan, including the Goycha region, are ethnically Turkic in origin.

Researching this topic is critical from a scholarly perspective and in preserving the region's historical heritage and cultural diversity. Focusing on Azerbaijani Turks, their dialects, and the history of their settlement is crucial for understanding the historical processes that have taken place in this territory.

Emphasis is placed on studying the linguistic structure of the dialects of the Goycha region, which helps to understand better their characteristics and their relationship to the Turkic language. Furthermore, exploring this topic contributes to preserving the unique features of the language and culture of the Azerbaijani people, who have faced deportations and changes in territorial distribution throughout history.

Therefore, this research is highly relevant and significant for linguistics, history, and cultural studies, as well as for delving deeper into the history and traditions of the Azerbaijani people.

The novelty of this research lies in its focused exploration of the Goycha region's historical connections and dialects within the Azerbaijani and Turkish languages. By analyzing the lexicon, phonetics, and idiolects of the region's dialects, the study provides new insights into the ethnolinguistic roots of the inhabitants of Western Azerbaijan. Additionally, the comparative analysis of the dialects sheds light on the Turkic origin of the people in the Goycha region, offering a fresh perspective on the area's linguistic heritage and cultural evolution.

Literature review. Researchers have long been interested in studying dialectology and historical linguistics in the Azerbaijani language. Various scholars have contributed to this field through their works, which shed light on the intricate linguistic features of different regions and historical developments within the Azerbaijani linguistic landscape.

The author [1] delves into the historical dialectology of the Azerbaijani language, providing valuable insights into the evolution of linguistic variations within the dialects. This work likely serves as a comprehensive resource for understanding the Azerbaijani language's linguistic diversity and historical roots. The author [2] examines the fundamentals of Azerbaijani dialectology, offering a foundational understanding of the linguistic variations present in different regions of Azerbaijan. This work

provides a structured framework for further research in Azerbaijani dialectology.

The author's [3] research on the dialect lexicon of the Azerbaijani language further expands on the linguistic richness and variations found within Azerbaijani dialects. Bayramov likely provides valuable insights into the vocabulary peculiarities of different Azerbaijani dialects by focusing on the lexicon.

Exploring the toponym system of Western Azerbaijan, the author [4] uncovers the rich tapestry of geographical names in the region. This work likely contributes to a deeper understanding of toponyms' cultural and historical significance within the Azerbaijani linguistic landscape.

The author [5] delves into the lexicon of the modern Azerbaijani language, likely providing a comprehensive overview of the vocabulary and terminology used in contemporary Azerbaijani discourse. This research likely sheds light on the evolving linguistic trends within Azerbaijani society.

The author [6] focuses on the lexicon of the modern Azerbaijani language, likely offering valuable insights into the semantic and syntactic structures of contemporary Azerbaijani vocabulary. This work likely contributes to a nuanced understanding of the linguistic dynamics in modern Azerbaijani speech.

The author [7] explores the historical interactions between ancient Turks and Armenia, shedding light on the linguistic and cultural exchanges that have shaped the region's linguistic diversity. This work offers a historical perspective on the linguistic developments in the area.

The author [8] delves into Turkological linguistics, likely providing a broader context for understanding the linguistic connections and influences between Turkic languages. This research offers a comprehensive overview of the linguistic landscape of Turkic languages.

The author [9] contributes to the basics of Azerbaijani dialectology, likely offering foundational knowledge on the linguistic variations and unique features of different Azerbaijani dialects. This work likely serves as a valuable resource for scholars interested in studying Azerbaijani dialects.

In conclusion, the literature on Azerbaijani dialectology and historical linguistics reflects a rich tapestry of research that contributes to Azerbaijani's understanding of the linguistic diversity and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani language. Through the works of various scholars, we gain valuable insights into the complex linguistic landscape of Azerbaijan and the historical developments that have shaped the Azerbaijani language over time.

METHODS

The initial step involves conducting an extensive literature review on Azerbaijani dialectology and historical linguistics. This review will provide a foundational understanding of the subject matter and help shape the direction of the study. Fieldwork is an essential method for collecting primary data. It involves engaging with native speakers in different regions of Azerbaijan, interviewing them, conducting surveys, and recording spoken language samples. This firsthand data collection is crucial for capturing the nuances and variations present in Azerbaijani dialects. Historical analysis plays a significant role in tracing the development of the Azerbaijani language and its everyday variations. This involves investigating historical texts, documents, and linguistic sources to understand how the language has evolved. By employing these methods and utilizing the necessary materials, researchers can comprehensively investigate the dialectology and historical linguistics of the Azerbaijani language, contributing to a deeper understanding of its linguistic diversity and historical development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Western Azerbaijan, one of the ancient settlements of Azerbaijan, including the Goycha region, is a vast area with a rich historical past where the ancient Turkic language also existed. However, during specific periods of history, Azerbaijani people were displaced from their homeland by Armenians, and the names of Azerbaijani historical places were Armenianized. The Azerbaijani people have long yearned for their ancestral lands. The most recent such deportation occurred in 1988. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani language and place names artificially attempted to be Armenianized have emerged victorious from this "struggle."

The purpose of this study is to compare the dialects of the Goycha region in the Azerbaijani language with Turkish, demonstrating that the similarities between the two languages are not coincidental. This comparison highlights the identical nature of both languages at the literary and dialectal levels. The comparison between the two Turkic languages includes both words of Turkic origin and loanwords of Arabic-Persian origin. This fact demonstrates that these languages originate from the same root, providing clear evidence that the inhabitants of Western Azerbaijan, including the Goycha region, are ethnically Turks.

The history of the Goycha region. The indigenous inhabitants of Western Azerbaijan, now called Armenia, were Azerbaijanis. Unfortunately, the dialects of Western Azerbaijan have been excluded from the classification of Azerbaijani dialects. Only the Iravan dialect has been included in this classification.

E. Azizov's classification of Azerbaijani dialects is not limited to the dialects within the Republic of Azerbaijan. The dialectal area of the Azerbaijani language also includes the dialects of Western Azerbaijan (Goycha, Zangezur, Daralayaz, Vedibasars, Zangibasars, Pambak, and Lori) [1].

Azerbaijani Turks historically lived in Western Azerbaijan, which is now present-day Armenia. However, over time, they were expelled and deported from their ancestral lands by the Armenian state. Unfortunately, the archaeology and ethnography of Western Azerbaijan have not been studied or researched, as the Armenian state did not permit it. The toponymy and history of the İrəvan Khanate, which historically existed in that area, have only been researched since the 1990s, following Azerbaijan's independence. Although there have been some studies on the Azerbaijani dialects in the Western Azerbaijan region, they have not been thoroughly investigated [2].

The expulsion of Azerbaijani Turks from what is now Armenia occurred in stages. Descendants of ancient Oghuz Turks who had settled in Western Azerbaijan faced deportation in the mid-20th century, around 1948. Later, a larger-scale deportation (ethnic cleansing) began in 1988, resulting in the expulsion of all Azerbaijanis from their homeland.

Additionally, Armenians sought to assert control over place names in the region, often renaming

historical Azerbaijani homelands. Lake Sevan derives from the Urartian word "su," meaning "water," which was later adopted into Armenian. Interestingly, ancient Armenian sources do not mention the name Sevan. The renaming of Lake Goycha to Sevan occurred in 1930. The apparent linguistic similarity between the Urartian "su" (water), Armenian "sov" (lake), and Turkic "suv" (water) is noteworthy.

Historically, the Goycha region has been inhabited by Azerbaijanis. The 5th-century Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi wrote in his work that Armenians migrated to this area during the reign of Armenian King Artaxias in the 2nd century BC [7].

The lexical structure of the dialects of the Goycha region. Idiolect does not differ much in its characteristics from the dialect it belongs to; the commonality is relatively superior to the difference because the differences are so insignificant that they do not justify it as a dialect. However, the differences are so significant that they justify distinguishing it as a dialect.

Dialects and idiolects of a language can differ from each other to varying degrees. From this point of view, the dialects and idiolects of the Azerbaijani language are not so sharply different from each other. For example, the population speaking the dialects and idiolects of the northern group of Azerbaijani Turkish and the population speaking the dialects and idiolects of another group can mutually understand each other, and there is no language barrier between them. However, in many parts of the world's languages, for example, Hindi and Chinese, speakers of different dialects need help understanding each other [8].

The author writes about these idiolects: "West Azerbaijan is a large area. Azerbaijanis living here had different dialects. For example, it belongs to the southern idiolect of Dara Alayaz, Iravan, Migri, Vedi, Goycha, Garagoyunlu, Agbaba, Pambek to the western idiolect. The Zangezur idiolect is closer to the Karabakh dialect" [5].

The study of the lexical, phonomorphological, and other features of the Western Azerbaijani idiolects reveals that the Agbaba, Goycha, and Dag Borchaly's idiolects have the characteristics of a Western idiolect accent. The Iravan and Darelayaz dialects have the characteristics of a Western, partly Eastern idiolect accent [8].

The process of developing the vocabulary of the Azerbaijani language continued by its rules. Language is a bright indicator of a people's material and spiritual culture. It is directly related to people's work and social activities. Whatever is developing and changing in society is immediately reflected in the language. The language's vocabulary constantly evolves; concepts require new words and names.

The enrichment of vocabulary is related to the creation of words. Word formation is the basis of the word-formation system of the language. In language, "speech creation" can be used in synchronic and diachronic aspects. Synchronous and diachronic word creation has different content. In diachronic word creation, it is investigated with the help of which means derivative words are formed. Synchronous word creation is about how derived words' derivational (word creation) meaning is expressed. Synchronous word formation studies the relation of language units to each other, while diachronous word formation studies the transition of one unit to another unit.

Word creation teaches the structure of words and the rules and methods of their formation. Here, the laws of the internal development of the language are demonstrated. Word formation is studied as part of lexis or grammar. This results from the correct definition of the scope and object of word creation, lexicon and grammar, which are different branches of linguistics. Studying word creation as a part of the lexicon is more appropriate. Because newly created words cannot be imagined outside the language's vocabulary. They enrich vocabulary [6].

Since the Azerbaijani people interacted with the Middle East, Russian, and Caucasian-Iberian peoples for centuries, their languages did not interact. The position of borrowed words in Azerbaijani dialects often differs from that in the literary language. Loanwords in the vocabulary of dialects are more subject to changes in both image and content according to the law of the internal development of the language than the loanwords in the literary language.

The sources of the borrowed words in the vocabulary of Azerbaijani dialects and idiolects are mainly three: 1) Arabic and Persian; 2) Russian; 3) Caucasian-Iberian languages. Borrowed words are not used equally in all Azerbaijani dialects and idiolects. Eastern dialects and idiolects have more Arabic and

Persian words than Western dialects and dialects. The words of the Caucasian-Iberian languages appear in the vocabulary of the northern dialects and idiolects, as well as the Azerbaijani dialects and dialects located in the territory of West Azerbaijan (Oghuz Turks) and Georgia (Karababa Turks).

Since Arabic and Persian words have been included in the vocabulary of Azerbaijani dialects and dialects since ancient times, they have undergone more changes in the rules and laws of the language. This change was of two kinds:

1) Some of these words (if there is a counterpart of the borrowed word) have gradually lost their independence and melted into the local word. Previously, it was used along with the local equivalent of the borrowed word (for example, qada-bala, qədər-qəza, dava-dərman, etc.), then it was replaced with a local word (for instance uzundraz, vurmabizən, üzbaşurət, dərdəqqaz, yığcəm, etc.); finally, it lost its independence within the local word and became a part of it.

2) Arabic and Persian words have gradually changed their phonetic appearance over many years under the influence of the phonetic laws of the language (harmony law, intonation, assimilation, dissimilation, etc.). Here are some examples of such words: maanə – (as "mahna" in Goycha idiolects) pretext, saman – (as "sahman" in Goycha idiolects) stock, hayat – (the same in Goycha region idiolects) life, ataş – (the same in Goycha region idiolects) fire, iraftar – (as "irəftar" in Goycha idiolects) – behavior, hekal – (as "heykal" in Goycha idiolects) monument, uruzgar – (the same in Goycha region idiolects) life, iras – (as "irast" in Goycha idiolects) neatly, hammı – (the same in Goycha region idiolects) everybody, xəş – (as "xəş" in Goycha idiolects) outlay, etc. [Şirəliyev, 2008].

Due to the reasons mentioned above, West Azerbaijani dialects have been able to preserve their antiquity. Therefore, the development points of ordinary words in the Turkish language have expanded. One of the reasons for the similarity of Western Azerbaijani dialects with the Turkish language is the fact that the population lives there in a compact form; the lack of kinship ties with representatives of Armenians and other peoples settled in the area did not affect the ethnic composition of the population, and therefore the lexicon of the local dialect.

The general vocabulary of the modern Azerbaijani language includes, in addition to words belonging to the literary language, words typical for all dialects of this language. Such words belonging to its dialects included in the vocabulary of the modern language are called dialect lexicons.

Although the literary language was mainly formed at the expense of local dialects, in the modern era, dialects do not have such a significant influence on it. However, dialects enrich the literary language, especially its vocabulary. A specific part of the vocabulary of the literary language is constantly increasing due to local idiolects [5].

Idiolects and dialects form an inexhaustible source that enriches the lexicon of Azerbaijani literary language. The modern state of the literary language of Azerbaijan clearly shows that all dialects played a part in its formation and, mainly, in its subsequent development. That is why the vocabulary of the modern Azerbaijani literary language contains many words that have passed through all the dialects of this language and are an organic part of it [5].

Dialectology occupies a special place in studying the history of language and people. At the same time, dialects and dialects are one of the primary sources in studying language history from a scientific point of view, the development history of certain words, and determining the points of elaboration. M.Shiraliyev writes: "When studying the history of the Azerbaijani language, in addition to written sources, the facts provided by the living language, especially the idiolects, are essential" [9]. As it is known, idiolects, in one way or another, limited feudalisms acquired several characteristics and different signs. They are formed into branches of a universal language or, in isolated cases, a language that retains the characteristics of another language that has been defeated due to crossbreeding. Therefore, when studying the history of any language, to clarify several features found in the written sources of specific periods, it is necessary to compare the dialectal materials with the materials of the written sources.

Dialect materials should be given special attention when forming the written language. Lexical units reflected in various written materials are found only in dialects and idiolects today. "This ensures proper investigation of the phonetic, lexical, and grammatical features of

Azerbaijani written language. Also, written monuments are one of the main sources for studying dialect lexicon" [3].

Quite a few ancient words have been preserved in the dialects and idiolects of the Azerbaijani language, and these words create ample opportunities for determining the stages of development of the Azerbaijani literary language and their initial variants. In the dialects and idiolects of the Azerbaijani language, some of the ancient Turkish words are used in a form that has undergone various phonetic changes. Although these words have become archaic for the modern literary language of Azerbaijan, they are still used in Azerbaijani dialects and idiolects [2].

Ancient Turkish words that have preserved their traces in the dialects and idiolects of the Azerbaijani language can be found in the monuments of the ancient Turkic language and in the works of poets who wrote and created in the Azerbaijani language in the XIII-XVIII centuries. These words create an objective image of the history of the Azerbaijani language.

From a morphological point of view, the Azerbaijani language belongs to the Oghuz Turkic language group. In addition to the Azerbaijani language, Turkish, Turkmen, and Gagauz languages are included in this group. However, Turkish is most suitable for the Azerbaijani language in terms of literary and dialectal dexterity. With the dialects of the Western group of the Azerbaijani language (especially the idiolects of the Goycha region), Turkish contains borrowings of both Turkish and Arabic-Persian origin. In these words, Turkish origin is associated with the unity of the ethnic origin of the population and, accordingly, their traditions being of the same root. The commonality of Arab-Persian borrowings is related to the fact that the population (Oghuz Turks) located in a close geographical area adopted and worshipped Islam at about the same time. The adoption of Islam changed the population's way of life and vocabulary. The words used in the Arabic language on religious, domestic and scientific topics first entered the spoken language of the population and then became consolidated in the literary language. The large number of such common words (both local and borrowed words) existing in the Turkic languages of the Oghuz group indicates that the population living in the

Goycha district is of Turkic origin. The joint use of words of Arabic-Persian origin, which entered Azerbaijani language dialects, coincides with the period after the Turks accepted Islam.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the research on the Goycha region's historical connections and dialects within the Azerbaijani and Turkish languages offers valuable insights into the ethnolinguistic roots of the inhabitants of Western Azerbaijan. The similarities found in the lexicon, phonetics, and idiolects of the Goycha region's dialects provide concrete evidence of the Turkic origin of the people in this region. This study contributes to linguistics, history, and cultural studies and is crucial in preserving the region's historical heritage and cultural diversity.

The literature review presented various scholarly works that delve into Azerbaijani dialectology and historical linguistics, providing a comprehensive understanding of the Azerbaijani language's linguistic landscape and cultural heritage. Scholars like Azizov, Bayramov, Dzhabarov and others have significantly enriched the field through their research on Azerbaijani dialects, lexicon, and toponymy, shedding light on the linguistic diversity and historical evolution of the Azerbaijani language.

The methods and materials employed in this research, including extensive literature reviews, fieldwork, and historical analysis, have played a crucial role in capturing the nuances and variations present in Azerbaijani dialects. Researchers have gained more profound insights into the linguistic diversity and historical development of the Azerbaijani language by investigating primary data and historical sources.

The study's results highlight the historical significance of Western Azerbaijan, particularly the Goycha region, as a critical area with a rich linguistic and cultural heritage. Despite the challenges faced by Azerbaijani Turks in preserving their ancestral lands and language, the research underscores the resilience of the Azerbaijani language and people in maintaining their linguistic identity amidst historical upheavals and forced deportations.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of studying and preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people, contributing to a deeper understanding

of the historical processes and traditions that have shaped the region. By exploring the dialects of the Goycha region and comparing them with Turkish, this study reaffirms the shared Turkic

roots of the inhabitants of Western Azerbaijan, highlighting the enduring linguistic and cultural connections between Azerbaijani and Turkish languages.

REFERENCES

1. Azizov, E. (2016). *Azərbaycan dilinin tarixi dialektologiyası* [Historical dialectology of the Azerbaijani language]. Baku: Elm və təhsil (in Azerbaijani).
2. Bayramov, I. (2015). *Azərbaycan dialektologiyasının əsasları* [Basics of Azerbaijani dialectology]. Baku: ADPU (in Azerbaijani).
3. Bayramov, I. (2011). *Azərbaycan dilinin dialekt ləksikası* [Dialect lexicon of the Azerbaijani language]. Baku: Elm və təhsil (in Azerbaijani).
4. Bayramov, I. (2005). *Qərbi Azərbaycan toponimlər sistemi* [Garbi Azerbaijan system of toponyms]. Baku: Elm (in Azerbaijani).
5. Dzhafarov, S. (2007). *Müasir Azərbaycan dili. Leksika* [Modern Azerbaijani language. Lexicon]. Baku: Şərq-Qərb (in Azerbaijani).
6. Hasanov, H. (1988). *Müasir Azərbaycan dilinin ləksikası* [Lexicon of modern Azerbaijani language]. Baku: Maarif (in Azerbaijani).
7. Qeybullayev, Q. (1992). *Qədim türklər və Ermanistan* [Ancient Turks and Armenia]. Baku: Azərşərh (in Azerbaijani).
8. Musayev, M. (2012). *Türkoloji dilçilik* [Turkological linguistics]. Baku: Mütərdzim (in Azerbaijani).
9. Shiraliyev, M. (2008). *Azərbaycan dialektologiyasının əsasları* [Basics of Azerbaijani dialectology]. Baku: Şərq-Qərb (in Azerbaijani).