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SOME REMARKS ON THE LANGUAGE OF MODERN TAJIK PUBLIC INSCRIPTIONS (PART II)

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Abstract

The present article deals with the Tajik language used in modern public inscriptions (sign-boards, sign-posts, billboard advertisements, political banners, etc.) documented in about 400 photographs taken in Tajikistan by various individuals in recent years. Some sociolinguistic problems are discussed (especially in the case of multilingual inscriptions) as well as morphology, vocabulary, word-formation and syntax of the texts in question.

1. Introduction

The present article is a second one dedicated to the study of the Tajik language used in modern public inscriptions, i.e. sign-boards, sign-posts, billboard advertisements, political banners, etc. The first part focused on the languages other than Tajik used in this type of inscriptions. It also included a classification of the inscriptions based on their content. Then the phonetics, phonology and orthography of Tajik inscriptions were analyzed. In this part of the paper their morphological structure will be analyzed.

1.1. Morphology

Noun inflection is limited to number in Tajik. Both native plurality markers, i.e. *-он* (see Perry 2005: 63) and *-ҳо*, can be observed in the analyzed material, e.g. *Тоҷикон* [71] ‘Tajiks’, *мəҳмонон* [40, 44] ‘guests’, *занҳҳо* [34, 84, etc.] ‘[phone]-calls’, *терминалҳо* [35] ‘terminals’. It has to be stressed that even though in modern Tajik the *-ҳо* marker may be used with any type of noun (Perry 2005: 63), it is found in the

analyzed corpus that it is only attached to inanimate, impersonal nouns. This suggests that the language of public inscriptions is rather conservative as it follows an older rule originating from the period of Classical Persian (that still exists in literary New Persian), according to which *-ҳо* is not used for people/persons (Rubinčik 2001: 111). Interestingly, *-ҳо* is also used for words borrowed from (or via) Russian, e.g. *купоромҳо* [61]. As far as the plurals of Arabic origin are concerned, there are forms with the *-ом* ending, e.g. *маҳсилом* [38] ‘studies’, which is typically used in Tajik for inanimate and abstract nouns (Perry 2005: 64). On the other hand, the ‘broken plurals’ are almost entirely absent from the analyzed material with the exception of some lexicalized forms (see Perry 2005: 65), e.g. *асъор* ‘currency’ [81] (Ar. سعر : *اسعار*).

Adjectives in Tajik are inflected only for grade. Most adjectives in the analyzed corpus are positive, e.g. *техникӣ* [37] ‘technical’, *экологӣ* [48], *исломӣ* [83], etc. There are no examples of the comparative grade, however, some superlatives are to be found, e.g. *муҳиммтарин* [49] ‘the most important’, *бузургтарин* [49] ‘the biggest’. No forms other than those expected in the Persian of Iran are found in the analyzed corpus, with the exception of the use of the superlative, which may differ. While in Persian the superlative of an adjective in its attributive meaning is only placed before the noun (Rubinčik 2001: 133), in Tajik it is also possible to use it within the frame of a normal izofat construction (Perry 2005: 142). There are examples of this specifically Tajik use of the superlative in the analyzed inscriptions, e.g. *дастоварди муҳиммтарин* [49] ‘the most important achievement’.

In the case of adverbs, even if – contrary to modern Persian – superlative forms may be found in Tajik (Perry 2005: 153), only positive and comparative grades are attested in the analyzed inscriptions, e.g. *хуу* [40] ‘well’; *наzdиктар* [50] ‘more closely’, *муғассалтар* [72] ‘in detail, [more] precisely’.

As far as pronouns are concerned, only personal pronouns are well attested in the analyzed corpus. They include the forms of 1 sg. *ман* [36, 70], 2 sg. *ми* [66], 2 sg./pl. polite *Шумо*¹ [53, 67 etc.], 1 pl. *мо* [43, 52 etc.], 3 pl. *онҳо* [41]. These are quite often used in the izofat construction in the possessive sense [36, 60 etc.]. There is an extremely high frequency of the 1 personal pronoun pl., which is particularly prevalent in ideological and political declarations. These inscriptions are expected to strengthen the feeling of inclusiveness and participation, so the over-use of the pronoun *мо* is understandable.

Apart from these pronouns, only a few examples of the reflexive pronoun *хӯд* [69, 79] and indefinite pronouns like *ҳеҷӯ кас* and *ҳеҷӯ низ* [46] are to be found in the analyzed inscriptions. An interesting example is the pronoun *Шумо* in inscription no. [53], where it is used as a name for an enterprise, and thus it is an example of a linguistic joke, as *Муаҷҷуқау Шумо* is “Enterprise Shumo” (such a reading is supported by the English variant of the inscription) but it may be also interpreted as “Your Enterprise”.

¹ A courtesy form based on the 2 pl. In the Tajik Cyrillic orthography the ordinary 2 pl. and polite 2 sg./pl. are clearly differentiated by the use of the capital *Ш* in the latter.

As far as verbal forms are concerned, Present Indicative tense forms are well attested, e.g. *мешавем* [50] ‘[we] become (1 pl.)’, *ҳаста[нð]* [51] ‘are (3 pl.)’, *ба ҳи-соб меравад* [33] ‘is counted [as] (3 sg.)’, *аст* [37, 45, etc.] / -*см* [58] ‘is (3 sg.)’, *мегуем* [59] ‘[we] say (1 pl.)’, *дорад* [39, 66] ‘has (3 sg.)’, -*ем* [73] ‘[we] are (1 pl.)’, *месозем* [69] ‘[we] build (1 pl.)’, *ҳастам* [70] ‘[I] am (1 sg.)’, *бовар намекунам* [84] ‘I don’t believe (neg. 1 sg.)’, *расонида мешавад* [74] (3 sg. pass.), *дода мешавад* [74] ‘is given (3 sg. pass.)’, *барнамегарданد* [41] ‘do not come back (neg. 3 pl.)’, *мебошад* ‘[he/she/it] is’² [62].

Most of the Present Indicative forms are used in expressions of general validity (Perry 2005: 212), e.g. in a citation from classical poetry: *ЗИ ШОИР ЗИНДА МЕМОНАД БА ГЕТИЙ НОМ ШОХОНРО* [39], as well as in political or ideological declarations like *ТАМАДДУНИ ОРИЁЙ ГАҲВОРАИ | МАЪНАВИИ ҶАҲОНИЁН АСТ.* [57]. Only a number of examples testify to the use of the Present Indicative in other functions, e.g. “*Мо Розунро бо дасти худ, бо саҳми худ, | бо дили сариор аз ватандӯстӣ месозем!*” [69], where the verbal form may be understood either as being used to express the action in progress at the moment of composing the inscription or – possibly – an action in the foreseeable future (Perry 2005: 211). An interesting example is provided by the GSM operator advertisement, “*Боеар намекунам | Зангҳо | ба ҳамаи | рақамҳо | о дир. | Beeline*” [84] (‘I don’t believe [it]. Call all numbers for o dir. Beeline’). The present tense seems to be also used to express future actions, e.g. on a Soviet-period World War II monument “(...) *ки дигар барнамегарданд*.” [41] ‘who will not come back.’

Simple Past tense forms may be noticed too, even if they are far less frequent. In isolated examples, such as “*БАҲОРИ | ОЛАМАФРӮЗ БА | ТОЧИКИСТОН | ОМАД*” [80] or “*миллати тоҷик ҷашини | наврӯзро дар тӯли асрҳо | ба монанди забони | модарии худ некӯ нигаҳ | дошт. | Эмомалӣ Раҳмон*” [79], *МО КУШОДА ШУДЕМ* [63] the Simple Past Tense is used in its most typical meaning, i.e. referring to an action performed and completed in the past (Perry 2005: 213). Nevertheless, most examples of what would be considered grammatically the past tense in the analyzed corpus are provided by the extensively used petrified phrase *хуи омадед* [38, 44, 55 etc.] ‘welcome’ and its variant *хуи омадӣ* (sg.) [75]. However, it has to be remembered that even if it is – from the formal point of view – the 2 pl. of the Simple Past Tense, in practice in the modern language, it is deprived of the reference to the past.

The Imperative (sg. and pl.), in turn, is more frequent, e.g. *бинарҳез!* [65] ‘abstain!’, and standard phrases, such as *лаззат баред* [52] ‘enjoy (pl.) sth.’ and *зинда боши* [36] ‘[long] live! (sg.)’. The prohibitive is attested by the form *нагузоред!* [54] ‘do not leave [sth.]! (2 pl. neg.)’.

The Perfect Indicative is not very well attested. Wherever it is to be found, it is used in its primary, traditional function, i.e. as a resultative form, rather than the non-witnessed perfect (see Perry 2005: 218–219), e.g. “(...) *ҲЕҶ КАС ВА ҲЕҶ ЧИЗ | ФАРОМОӮШИ НАШУДААСТ*” [46] (‘No-one and nothing has been forgotten’).

² An alternative present form of the verb *to be* (Perry 2005: 205).

The Definite Future Tense can be found in at least one inscription, “(...) *ки Тоҷикистонро* (...) *табдил хоҳад дод!*” [43] (‘(...) which will change Tajikistan’). The type of text in which the form in question appears (a solemn political declaration) agrees with what Perry notices about the Definite Future Tense in Tajik, i.e. that it is used in the literary style and may have an “asseverative nuance” (Perry 2005: 216).

Past participles that appear on their own (that is not as a part of complex verbal forms) may be found in the analyzed corpus too, e.g. *накарда гиря* [41] ‘not having cried’.

The archaic Optative form of the verb *to be* may be found in a number of solemn political declarations, e.g. “*Поянда бод, Истиқолияти давлатии Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон*” [64] (‘Let the independence of the Republic of Tajikistan be eternal!’) or in conventional festive greetings, like “*Наврӯзи | ҳуҷастонай | муборак бод, | дӯстон!*” [78] (‘Let Nawruz be happy [and] blessed, friends!’).

As far as the verb *to be* is concerned, apart from the stem *бод-*, forms based on the older version, i.e. *був-* are attested, too, c.f. *бувад* [77]. Statistically, the most frequently observed verbal form is the 3rd sg. Simple Present of the verb *to be*, i.e. *аcm /ast/* or its enclitic form *-cm /-st/*.

Interestingly, all or almost all of the verbal forms attested in the analyzed corpus belong to the common Fārsi-Tojiki inventory. In other words, none of the specifically Tajik forms, which are numerous, are to be found.

The attested prepositions include simple prepositions (*аз, ба, дар, mo* etc.), both singly and in combinations, including some variants, like the poetical and/or stylistically marked variant of *az*, i.e. *зу* [42]. Some derived prepositions (Perry 2005: 91) and prepositional phrases (Perry 2005: 93) are to be found as well, such as *ба сӯ-и* ... ‘in the direction of’, e.g. *ба сӯи ғарб* ‘to the west’ [42], *баро-и* ... ‘for; in order to’, e.g. *ҷои барои реклама* [68] ‘a place for an advertisement’. Specifically Tajik adpositions, e.g. *камӯ/қамӯ* (see Perry 2005: 91; Aliev, Okawa 2010) are not found.

Single prepositions (both simple and combined) are common in Tajik (including colloquial Tajik) and Fārsi and if there are subtle differences, these are mostly noticeable in the manner in which they are used (Aliev, Okawa 2010). It is probable that such minor peculiarities may be seen in some of the analyzed inscriptions, as in the use of *бар* as an independent preposition (Aliev, Okawa 2010), e.g. *бар дӯстон* ‘upon friends’ [76]. Similarly, the denominal preposition *баъд* is attested within the izofat phrase: *баъди солҳову асрҳо* [41], whereas in Persian it is normally used as a part of the complex preposition *بعد از* (Rubinčík 1970: 1.212).

There are also certain specific structures, such as the phrase *ба номи ...* wherever an object (a street, a school, etc.) is named after an individual, etc., e.g. *Донишгоҳи давлатии Кӯлоб ба номи Рӯдакӣ* [47], *кӯчаи ба номи М. Турсунзода* [56]. The modern Persian of Iran follows a different model, attaching the personal name to the name of the object in the izofat phrase, c.f. *دانشگاه شهید محتشمی* etc.

The postposition *po* is used in its literary form [42, 82, etc.] and there is no trace of the adpositions *ба, бо, да* (see Perry 2005: 104).

References

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- Rubinčik Yu.A. 2001. *Grammatika sovremenno persidskogo literaturnogo jazyka*. Moskva.

Appendix

List of inscriptions

33. Tajik safari 2010-3-29 Dushanbe мөхмонхонаи Тоҷикистон [at:] <http://www.tajiksafari.com/public/userfiles/Hotels/Hotel%20Tajikistan/frant.jpg>
34. КРЫСМАН 2008-6-28b Dushanbe Зангҳо ба Русия дар вақти шабона (...) | Звонки в Россию в ночное время | [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/11645942>
35. Шахриёр Ёров 2013-9-21 Dushanbe ФУРӯШИ ТЕРМИНАЛҲОИ МАБЛАГУЗАРОНӢ (...) [at:] <http://static.panoramio.com/photos/large/96821584.jpg>
36. jahongard 2013-4-14 Dushanbe ЗИНДА БОШ ЭЙ ВАТАН, ТОҶИКИСТОНИ ОЗОДИ МАН [at:] <http://static.panoramio.com/photos/large/92550085.jpg>
37. Damir-Kadyrov 2011-5-30 Dushanbe МАРКАЗИ САВДОИ ТЕХНИКӢ | ИНТИХОБ НАМОЁН ACT! | ТЕХНО СИЛА [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/53457338>
38. Хайриддин 2007-11-27 Dushanbe (...) МАКТАБИ ТАҲСИЛОТИ МИЁНАИ УМУМИИ НО 51 (...) | (...) СРЕДНЯЯ ОБЩЕОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНАЯ ШКОЛА НО 51 (...) | XУШ ОМАДЕД [at:] <http://static.panoramio.com/photos/large/34918142.jpg>
39. Parviz.Tj 2007-6-15 Panjikent ЗИ ШОИР ЗИНДА МЕМОНАД БА ГЕТӢ НОМ ШОҲОНРО || ФУРӯF АЗ РӯДАҚӢ ДОРД ЧИРОФИ ДУДАИ СОМОН | ز شاعر زنده می ماند | به گیتی نام شاهان را || فروغ از روکی دارد چراغ دوده سامان acm! [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2759133>
40. zachheise 2009-5-17 Khorugh XУШ ОМАДЕД МЕҲМОНОН! (МЕҲМОНОН) [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/34258940>
41. gundomar 2009-5-29a Khujand БА ЁД ОРЕД! | БАҶДИ СОЛҲОВУ АСРҲО ЁРОН, | БА ЁД ОРЕД! | ОНҲОРО, КИ ДИГАР БАРНАМЕГАРДАНД. | НАКАРДА | ГИРЯВУ ЗОРИЙ НАКАРДА НОЛАЮ АФГОН, | ШАҲИДОНРО | ШАВЕД АРЗАНДА | ОНҲО ЧУН ФИДО КАРДАНДЮ || 1941 * 1945 || ПОМНИТЕ! | ЧЕРЕЗ ГОДА, | ЧЕРЕЗ ВЕКА, | О ТЕХ, КТО УЖЕ НЕ ПРИДЕТ НИКОГДА | ПОМНИТЕ. | НЕПЛАЧТЬЕ! | В ГОРЛЕ ЗДЕРЖКИТЕ | СТОНЫ, ГОРКИЕ СТОНЫ. | ПАМЯТИ ПАВШИХ БУДТЕ | ДОСТОЙНЫ! [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/30169760>
42. gundomar 2009-5-29b Khujand МО БА ИСТИҚБОЛИ | БОНГУ НАҶРАҲОИ | РАҶДУ БАРҚ | ҚАҲРАМОНОНА | БА ҶАҲИ БЕАМОН БАРХОСТЕМ, | ОФТОБОСО БА СӮИ | FARB RAFTA, | МО ЗИ ШАРҚ | КОҲИ(?) БАХТИ | ОДАМИРО ДАР ҶАҲОН | ОРОСТЕМ || (...) [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/30169860>
43. Чутанов Атабек 2010-4-16 Konibodom Конибодом гӯшаи хушманзараи диёри мо буда, бо обу хоки зархезу [пурбаракаташ] на танҳо | макони пахта ва меваҳои шаҳдбор, балки парваришгоҳи кадрҳои [хушилаёқату] тавоно мебошад, | Эмомалӣ Раҳмон [at:] <http://static.panoramio.com/photos/large/51373612.jpg>
44. Solti 2007-10-8 Isfara Xуши омадед, | Меҳмонони ази! || Добро пожаловать, | дорогие гости! [at:] <http://static.panoramio.com/photos/large/9839493.jpg>

45. Асатулло Узаев 2010-5-27a Isfara 20 сол | *Истиқолият ободии макон, | файзу шукӯҳи диёр аст.* | 1991–2011 [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/36023520>
46. Rustam Khalikov 2008-6-20 Khorugh 1941 I[945] | *ҲЕҶ КАС ВА ҲЕҶ ЧИЗ | ФАРОМӮШ НАШУДААСТ* [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/11560010>
47. sulaymon shobek 2007-7-6 Kulob *Донишгоҳи давлатии Кӯлоб ба номи Рӯдаки (sic)* [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/4443240>
48. sulaymon shobek 2007-7-6 Kulob *МАРКАЗИ | ЭКОЛОГӢ || ECOLOGICAL | CENTER* [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/4443318>
49. ackoreo 2011-10-7b Qorghonteppa *ИСТИҚОЛИЯТИ ДАВЛАТИ ДАСТОВАРДИ МУХИМТАРИН | ВА БУЗУРГТАРИНИ ТАҶРИХИ НАВИНИ ХАЛҚИ | ТОЧИКИСТОН МЕБОШАД.* | ЭМОМАЛӢ РАҲМОН [at:] <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/61364801>
50. kasp 2008-7-26b Vahdat *Мо наздиктар мешавем! | (...) | пасандозҳо | (...) | Маблаг-гузори | аз 100\$ то 300 000\$ | (...) [at:]* <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/58296161>
51. <http://ds-lands.com> 2014-8-15b Dushanbe *ЗИЁИЁН | НЕРУВА | ҶАВҲАРИ | АҚЛОНИИ | МИЛЛАТ, | ҚУВВАИ | ПЕШБАР[АНДАИ] | ҶОМЕ[А] | ҲАСТА[НД.] | ЭМОМАЛӢ РАҲМОН* [at:] <http://ds-lands.com/photo/cities/dushanbe/10/>
52. Joao Leitao JoaoleitaoTRAVEL 2012-6-12g Dushanbe *ТАРАБХОНАИ | Кӯҳсор | Аз маззаи таомҳоу | хотирмони мо лаззат баред || Kuhsor | RESTAURANT | Join us for a dinner to remember | (...) [at:]* <https://www.flickr.com/photos/joaoleitao/8134259741/>
53. Joao Leitao JoaoleitaoTRAVEL 2012-6-12h Dushanbe *Myaccisau | Шумо || Internet & Digital Services | Shoma* [at:] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/joaoleitao/8134259741/>
54. Le*Gluon 2011-6-11 Dushanbe *НАГУЗОРЕД | НЕ ОСТАВЛЯЙТЕ* [at:] https://www.flickr.com/photos/le_gluon/5820406913/
55. abuabdulloh1988 2011-5-24 Isfara *Хүй омадёд ба Исфараи бостонӣ [at:]* <https://www.flickr.com/photos/63290521@N07/5756659985/sizes/o/in/photostream/>
56. Dean Chahim Dean.Chahim 2011-8-11 Istaravshan *кӯчаи | ба номи | М. Турсунзода | 91* [at:] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/chahim/6310663339/>
57. placchic 2010-2-14 Khujand *ТАМАДДУНИ ОРИЁЙ ГАҲВОРАИ | МАҶНАВИИ ҶАҲОНИЁН АСТ.* [at:] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/27304941@N08/5638563065>
58. Alex Kühni alex_photo_82 2013-10-28 Khorugh *СУЛҲ | МАҶНИИ | ТАҶРИХИ | МОСТ* [at:] https://www.flickr.com/photos/alex_kuehni/10965062064/
59. Talking Tajik 2011-12-17 Tajikistan *БА РИШВА | дар бахши маориф | НЕ! МЕГУЕМ | 9 декабр | рӯзи умуниҷаҳонии мубориза бо ришива* [at:] <http://talkingtajik.blogspot.com/2011/12/until-2012-taj.html>
60. 2012-11-24 Dushanbe *24 ноябр | ПАРЧАМИ ТОЧИКИСТОН | МУҚАДДАСОТ ВА | РАМЗИ МИЛЛИИ МОСТ!* [at:] <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2012/11/24/time-to-change-tajikistans-flag/>
61. 2014-10-6 Dushanbe *ҶУМҲУРИИ ТОЧИКИСТОН || ҶАМӢЯТИ САҲОМИИ КУШОДАИ | “КУРОРТҲОИ ТОЧИКИСТОН” || ОТКРЫТОЕ АКЦИОНЕРНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО | “КУРОРТҲОИ ТОЧИКИСТОН” || OPEN JOINT STOCK COMPANY | “KURORTHOI TOJIKISTON”* [at:] <http://www.kurort.tj/en/contacts.html>
62. British Muzkol Pamir Expedition 2013 2013 – Pamir highway *Иҷлосияи XVI Шӯрои Олии | Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон, | сарҷасмаи Ваҳдати Миллӣ | ва поидории Истиқолияти | давлатии Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон | мебошад.* [at:] <http://britishmuzkol2013.wordpress.com/2013/09/25/driving-the-pamir-highway-the-roof-of-the-world/>
63. Vdushanbe.ru 2014-10-11 Dushanbe *МО КУШОДА ШУДЕМ* [at:] <http://vdushanbe.ru/catalog/shops/torgovo-ofisnyj-centr-rudaki-plaza/>
64. Zack Knowles 2014-10-12a Istaravshan *Поянда бод, Истиқолияти давлатии Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон* [at:] http://tj.worldmapz.com/photo/161_en.htm

65. Zack Knowles 2014-10-12b Istaravshan *Аз амали бад бинарҳез!* [at:] http://tj.worldmapz.com/photo/161_en.htm
66. Ozodagon 2014-9-5 Tajikistan *КОРРУПСИЯ | Муқовимати тӯ | аҳамияти калон дорад!* [at:] <http://www.ozodagon.com/17944-peshnodi-honanda-misli-kdak-dar-shabakaoi-itimo-girya-nakuned.html>
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