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

**Keywords:** Tajik language, public inscriptions, multilingual texts

**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’, мехмонон [40, 44] ‘guests’, зандҳо [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 -қо is not used for people/persons (Rubinčik 2001: 111). Interestingly, -қо is also used for words borrowed from (or via) Russian, e.g. курортқо [61]. As far as the plurals of Arabic origin are concerned, there are forms with the -ом ending, e.g. тахсилот [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] (Ар. С: Сур).

Adjectives in Tajik are inflected only for grade. Most adjectives in the analyzed corpus are positive, e.g. техниқӣ [37] ‘technical’, экологӣ [48], исломӣ [83], etc. There are no examples of the comparative grade, however, some superlatives are to be found, e.g. мухимтарин [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. дастовардӣ мухимтарин [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. хуш [40] ‘well’; наздиктар [50] ‘more closely’, муфассалтар [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. ту [66], 2 sg./pl. polite ШумоI [53, 67 etc.], 1 pl. мо [43, 52 etc.], 3 pl. онқо [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 худ [69, 79] and indefinite pronouns like чеқ кас and чеқ чиз [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 Муассисаи 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 И 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[ҳд.] [51] ‘are (3 pl.)’, ба ҳи-соб меравад [33] ‘is counted [as] (3 sg.)’, аст [37, 45, etc.] / -ст [58] ‘is (3 sg.)’, мезуем [59] ‘[we] say (1 pl.)’, дорад [39, 66] ‘has (3 sg.)’, -ем [73] ‘[we] are (1 pl.)’, мезозем [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.)’, барнамегарданд [41] ‘do not come back (neg. 3 pl.)’, мебошад ‘[he/she/it] is’ [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 ШОЙР ЗИНДА МЕМОНАД БА ГЕТИЙ НОМ ШОХОНОРО [39], as well as in political or ideological declarations like ТАМАДДУНИ ОРИЙЕ ГАХВОРАИ | МАЪНАААИ САХОНИЙЕН АСТ. [57]. Only a number of examples testify to the use of the Present Indicative in other functions, e.g. “Мо Рогунро бо дастги худ, бо сахми худ, | бо дили сарифор аз ватандуст мезозем!” [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, “Бовар намекунам | Зангҳо | ба ҳамаи | рақамҳо | о дир. | Beeline” [84] (‘I don’t believe [it]. Call all numbers for 0 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 “БАХОРИ | ОЛАМАФРУЗ БА | ТОЧИКИСТОН | ОМАД” [80] or “миллати точиқ ҷаши | навружро тар тўли асрҳо | ба монанди забони | модарии худ неку нигах | доиш. | Эмомали Рахмон” [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 хуш омадед [38, 44, 55 etc.] ‘welcome’ and its variant хуш омад (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. бириқрехс! [65] ‘abstain!’, and standard phrases, such as лаззат баред [52] ‘enjoy (pl.) sth.’ and зиндаг бош [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. “(…) ҲЕҚ КАС ВА ҲЕҚ ЧИЗ | ФАРОМУШ 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 То-
чикистонро (... табол хоҳад ҳод!" [43] ‘(...) which will change Tajikistan’).
The type of text in which the form in question appears (a solemn political declara-
tion) 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 hav-
ing cried’.

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

As far as the verb to be is concerned, apart from the stem бош-, 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.
аст /ast/ or its enclitic form -ст /-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, бо, дар, то etc.), both
singly and in combinations, including some variants, like the poetical and/or stylis-
tically marked variant of аз, i.e. зи [42]. Some derived prepositions (Perry 2005: 91)
and prepositional phrases (Perry 2005: 93) are to be found as well, such as ба сў-и ...
‘in the direction of’, e.g. ба сўи гирб ‘to the west’ [42], баро-и ... ‘for; in order to’, e.g.
чой барои реклама [68] ‘a place for an advertisement’. Specifically Tajik adpositions,
e.g. кат/қат (see Perry 2005: 91; Aliev, Okawa 2010) are not found.

Single prepositions (both simple and combined) are common in Tajik (includ-
ing 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 дўстон
‘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. Донишго
давлатии Кўлоб ба номи Рудаки [47], кўчаи ба номи М. Турсунзода [56]. The mod-
ern 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 شمسینی etc.

The postposition ро 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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Rubinčík Yu.A. 1970. *Persidsko-Russkij slovar’.* Moskva.
Rubinčík Yu.A. 2001. *Grammatika sovremenno persidskogo literaturnogo jazyka*. Moskva.

Appendix

List of inscriptions
33. Tajik safari 2010-3-29 Dushanbe mehmmonhona Toqiikiston [at:] http://www.tajiksafari.com/public/userfiles/Hotels/Hotel%20Tajikistan/frant.jpg
34. Крысман 2008-6-28 Dushanbe Занрхо ба Русия дар вақти шабона (…) | Звонки в Россию в ночное время | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/11645942
35. Jahongard 2013-4-14 Dushanbe Зинда бош эй Ватаң, тоҷикистон озоди ман | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/92550085.jpg
36. Damir-Kadyrov 2011-5-30 Dushanbe маркази технология дар ноён аст! | Техника на ное дарда | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/53457338
37. Parviz.Tj 2007-6-15 Panjikent Зинда мемонад ба ғитон | Мемонад ба ғит | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2759133
38. Zachheise 2009-5-17 Khorugh Хуш омадед мекон | Хуш омадед | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/34258940
39. gundomar 2009-5-29b Khujand ба ёд оред! | Ба ёд оред | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/30169760
40. Chuganov Tilavov 2010-4-16 Konibodom конибором мушона ки фароо мо буда, бо обу хоки зархузу | Конибором мушенуаранди дигери мо буда, бо обу хоки зархузу | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/30169860
41. Solti 2007-10-8 Isfara Добро пожаловать, дорогие гости! | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/51373612.jpg
42. Solti 2007-10-8 Isfara Хуш омадед, | Мекхонони азиз! | [at:] http://www.panoramio.com/photo/9839493.jpg
65. Zack Knowles 2014-10-12b Istaravshan Az amali bad biparxes! [at:] http://tj.worldmapz.com/photo/161_en.htm
66. Ozodagon 2014-9-5 Tajikistan КОРРУПСИЯ | Муқовимати ту | аҳамиятини ишон дорад! [at:] http://www.ozodagon.com/17944-peshniodi-honanda-misli-kdak-dar-shabakaoi-itimo-giyra-nakuned.html
67. Tojnews.org 2014-3-31 Khujand МО БО ШУМОЕМ | ЧАНОБИ ОЛИ! [at:] http://tojnews.org/akshoi-rahmon-ba-joyi-reklama-darmoni-chomeai-bemor
68. Pda.pressa.tj 2014-10-12 Tajikistan | ОЙ БАРОИ РЕКЛАМА | ТЕЛ.: … [at:] http://pda.pressa.tj/tochikiston/reklamai-ichtimoi-darmoni-chomeai-bemor
69. Voice of America 2011-10-1 Tajikistan Мо Ровунро бо дasti худ, бо саҳми худ, | бо дили саршор аз ватанд ўстем! [at:] http://www.voanews.com/content/tajikistan-plans-to-build-worlds-tallest-hyrdo-dam-133976238/148285.html
70. stuartandalison 2011-2-20a Dushanbe Алло! | Ман дар хона ҳастам! || Нархи муфиди баробар барои занги ҳо | дар Россия* аз Тоҷикистон || (…) [at:] http://stuartandalison.blogspot.com/
71. Llewellyn Bardecki 2014-10-24 Istaravshan Иљосияи XVI-уми Шӯрои Олии Тоҷикистон | саҳифаи дурахион дар таърихи тоҷикистон | саҳифаи дурахион дар таърихи тоҷикистон || (…) [at:] http://blogs.bootsnall.com/llew/eating-and-being-eaten-in-northern-tajikistan.html
72. Kivafellows 2014-10-25 Kulob Алоқа бо наздикон – беба ҳаст! | связь з родными не имеет цены! || Тӯҳфа барои занги даромад + 4 дирам* | Подарок за входящие + 4 дирама* || Муфассалтар (…) | Подробности (…) || Beeline | (…) [at:] https://kivafellows.wordpress.com/tag/remittances/
73. Arnis Balcus 2010-10-10 Panjikent | МО ИНТЕРНАТИСТИРЕМ | [at:] http://balcus.blogspot.com/2010/10/penjikent.html
74. Ozodagon 2014-3-19 Dushanbe БА ДИҚҚАТИ ШАХРВАНДОН | РАСОНИДА МЕШАВАД, КИ БАРОИ | ГИРИФТАНИ МАЪЛУМОТ АЗ | ШӯЪБАИ КАБУЛ МАСЛИ-ҲАТДИҲӢ | БА МУҲОЧИРОНИ МЕХНАТИ ТАНҲО | БА СОКИНОНИ ШАҲРИ ДУШАНБЕ | ИЧОЗАТ ДОДА МЕШАВАД. [at:] http://ozodagon.com/15406-orat-i-муирони-тоик-аз-вatan-sar-meshavad-aks.html
75. Ozodagon 2013-3-20 Dushanbe Хуш омад, Наврӯзи оламафтран! [at:] http://www.ozodagon.com/9197-аксо-шиорой-наврз-дар-кхув-пашкхой-душанбе.html
76. Ozodagon 2013-3-20 Dushanbe Наврӯзи | навбоҳорон | бар дўстон | муборак! [at:] http://www.ozodagon.com/9197-аксо-шиорой-наврз-дар-кхув-пашкхой-душанбе.html
77. Ozodagon 2013-3-20 Dushanbe Наврӯзи | хухастапай | мубоқ дўст, | дўстон! [at:] http://www.ozodagon.com/9197-аксо-шиорой-нат-дар-кхув-пашкхой-душанбе.html
78. Ozodagon 2013-3-20 Dushanbe БАҲОРИ | ОЛАМАФРУЗ БА | ТОЧИКИСТОН | ОМАД [at:] http://www.ozodagon.com/9197-аксо-шиорой-наврз-дар-кхув-пашкхой-душанбе.html
ТАБДИЛ ХОХАД ДОД! | Змомалв Рахмон [at: https://abduazim.wordpress.com/2010 /11/12/%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%88%D1%82-%C2%AB%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82 %D0%BA%D0%B0%C2%BB-%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D2%93%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%B1-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D1%82%D0%B5 %D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%84%D0%BE%D0%BD/]
83. Nahzat 2014-9-10 Khujand ШУЪБАИ ХИЗБИ НАҲЗАТИ ИСЛОМИИ ТОЧИКИСТОН | [at: http://nahzat.tj/13022-daftari-viloyatii-nit-ro-dar-shari-huand-bastand-aks.html]
84. Dastbadast 2015-1-16 Tajikistan Бовар намекунам | Зангҳо | ба ҳамаи | рақамҳо | 0 дир. | [at: http://www.dastbadast.tj/images/Firuz/beeline2.jpg]