ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT: The Appearance of the Initial [dʒ] Sound in Olmach Community Utterances

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This study investigates the usage of the word initial [dʒ] sound in the place of the [j] sound in standard Uzbek among the three generations of Olmachi community speakers in Djizak, Uzbekistan. These variations are mainly observed at the beginning of the same words. In standard Uzbek people pronounce the initial [j] sound in certain words such as jur [jur] ‘go,’ but its dialect version is expressed with the initial [dʒ] sound jur [dʒur] the appearance of which in Uzbek dates back to the 11th century (Daniyarov, 1975). The dialect version of the words that start with the initial [dʒ] sound is declining in this community where the young generation prefers using the initial [j] sound of standard (literary) Uzbek. As stated by Wolfram (2010), dialects are not static and they constantly interact with other dialects. As the language goes through change, “dialects reflect the past, present and the future” (p.103). Surely, this historical process of dialect change can be observed within three generations of the Olmachi community. Analyzing the changes that occur in the community, I hypothesized that the oldest generation of 50-90 year old participants produce the initial [dʒ] sound in certain words most of the time. The middle generation of 31-50 year olds would produce the sound less than the older generation,
and the youngest generation of 18-30 years old would produce the least. To test the hypotheses, two types of tests were used that helped to retrieve the usage of the initial \([dʒ]\) sound: *Picture Describing Task* and *Conversation* with the research assistant. The differences in production of the initial \([dʒ]\) sound that the two tasks yielded were calculated, and the gender differences in production of the sound were totaled.

On the basis of judgment sampling, where the subjects are selected non-randomly based on the characteristics that define them to be the true Olmachi community members, not influenced by other dialect speakers, the research assistant conversed with 12 participants (6 male and 6 female) from each generational group. Participants talked with an assistant about the years, pronounced as [jɪl] or [dʒɪl] they were born, birthday and wedding parties, **good** [jɑχʃɪ] or [dʒɑχʃɪ] or **bad** [jomon] or [dʒomon] things that have happened to them, and about other events that occurred in their lives. After the conversations were over, they were shown 27 pictures that represent words that start with the initial \([j]\) sound in standard Uzbek. The words were such as **yo’l** [jol] ‘road’ **yamoq** [jamoq] ‘patch’ or **yur**, [jur] ‘go or walk’ and others. The conversations and picture-describing task utterances were recorded and a total of 36 participants’ responses were transcribed for the usage of those two sounds, and the percentage of words that started with the initial \([j]\) or the initial \([dʒ]\) sounds used among the three groups were calculated.

The results demonstrated that in the *Conversation* with the research assistant and in the *Picture Describing Tasks* the \([dʒ]\) sound was used the most by the oldest generation, less by the middle generation and the least with the youngest generation. In addition, gender differences showed that females used the \([dʒ]\) sound the most in both tasks, and younger generation males were in the forefront of the change towards the production of the initial \([j]\) sound used in standard Uzbek.