

MODULE 14 Bridging Turkish with Azerbaijani
MUSIC AND MUSICIANS – AZERI FOLKLORE IN THE 20th CENTURY
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INTRODUCTION TO AZERBAIJANI

The Alphabet

The Azerbaijani alphabet has gone through many changes in the past hundred years, reflecting the region's complex history. Originally written in Arabic script (still used today by Azeris who live in Iran), the Republic of Azerbaijan saw the script change to Latin (1929), Cyrillic (1939), and back to Latin (1991). Today's alphabet is Latin based script similar to the Turkish alphabet:

A = a as in awe
B = b
C = j as in jar
Ç = ch as in chip
D = d
E = e as in help
Ə = ae, a cross between apple and eat
F = f
G = full g as in get
Ğ = voiced glottal gh (Turkish – “y” or “w” glide)
H = h
X = voiced glottal kh
ı = short u as in put
i = short i as in it
J = zh
K = k
Q = hard g leaning toward k
L = l
M = m
N = n
O = o as in no
Ö = rounded, tensed o
P = p
R = r, frontal, slightly trilled
S = s
Ş = sh
T = t
U = u as in “cute”
Ü = rounded tensed u
V = v
Y = used as a glide, sounds like in “yield”
Z = z

These pronunciations are approximate – You will learn the sounds as you listen to the videos in the lesson! For other alphabets and a recording of native speaker pronunciation, see Follow Up: “Azerbaijani language, alphabets and pronunciation”

Reading Azerbaijani

Many words in Azerbaijani are written the same or only slightly different from Turkish:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
dünya	dünya
çox	çok
gözəl	güzel
kiçik	küçük
təbiət	tabiat
başlamaq	başlamak
gelmək	gelmek
qatılmaq	katılmak

Many words in Azerbaijani are easy to recognize if you watch for vowel and consonant changes such as the following:

Common consonant alterations:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
M - mən	B – ben
Q – qalqmaq	K – kalkmak
D – daş	T – taş
X – xalq	H - halk

Azerbaijani “e” can be “e” or “a” in Turkish:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
gel	gel
eşq	aşk

Azerbaijani “o” can be “o” or “e” in Turkish:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
orta	orta
alov	alev

The Azerbaijani vowel “ə” can be “e” or “a” in Turkish:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
gəcə	gece
məhəbbət	mehabet
mədəniyyət	medeniyet

Many words used in Azerbaijani exist in Turkish but are considered archaic. While you would not use them in everyday Turkish speech, you may encounter them in reading, especially in poetry or older texts. Many of these words have Farsi or Arabic roots:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe	Turkce esanlamli
məktəb	mektep	Okul
tələbə	talebe	öğrenci
müəllim	müellim	öğretmen
dost	dost	arkadaş
qəm	gam	keder, dert
nalə	nâle	inilti, inleme
fəryad	feryât	inilti, inleme, ciglik, yakaris
nakam	nâkam	arzusuna ulaşmayan “unfulfilled”

Some Azerbaijani words look similar to Turkish words but are used differently:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
öz – one’s own	kendi
kimi – like, as	gibi
kişi – man	erkek / er kişi
maraq/ maraqlı – interest, interesting	ilgi /ilginç

Some Azerbaijani words are used as in Turkish but can be hard to recognize:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
belə	böyle
eylə	öyle
necə?	nasıl?
nəçə?	kaç?
harada?	nerede?
torpaq	toprak
elamək	etmək/ yapmak
danışmaq	konuşmak
başə düsmək	anlamak

Some common Azerbaijani words and phrases are not used in standard Turkish at all, although you may hear them in eastern dialects:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
bəli / hə	evet
xəyr / yox	yok
çörək	ekmek
yaxşı	iyi
pul	para
anadan olmaq	doğmak
qulaq asmaq	dinlemek

Some useful Azerbaijani phrases:

Azərbaycanca	Türkçe
Salam	Merhaba
Xoş gelmişsiniz	Xoş gelmişsiniz
Çox şadam	Çok memnun oldum
Necəsiniz?	Nasılsınız?
Yaxşıyam	İyiyem
Sağ olun/ təşəkkür edirəm	Sağol, teşekkür edirem
Xoş gelmişsiniz	Xoş geldiniz
Görüşənədək / hələlik	Görüşmek üzere

Uğurlar olsun!

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