

**CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON LEXICAL LAYER STRUCTURE: COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK**

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Annotation: This study investigates how cultural contexts contribute to the formation and development of lexical layers in English and Uzbek. The research focuses on culturally specific vocabulary—terms related to traditions, religion, and daily life—and examines how such lexicon reflects the values and worldviews of each speech community. By applying comparative and descriptive linguistic methods, the paper highlights both similarities and differences in lexical stratification, offering insights into how language mirrors culture. The study contributes to cross-cultural linguistics and supports deeper understanding language teaching.

Keywords: Lexical layers, cultural influence, English language, Uzbek language, comparative linguistics, vocabulary stratification, language and culture, sociolinguistics, lexical borrowing, cultural semantics.

Introduction

Language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of the historical, social, and cultural experience of its speakers. Among the core components of any language is its lexicon—the total inventory of words and expressions that speakers use to convey meaning. The structure and development of a lexicon are influenced by various linguistic and extralinguistic factors such as etymology, cultural contact, language policy, and globalization. Understanding the similarities and differences between lexicons of different languages offers valuable insights into how humans categorize and conceptualize the world.

English and Uzbek, though they belong to different language families—English to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family, and Uzbek to the Turkic language family—nonetheless share certain universal semantic categories such as kinship, color, time, and body parts. These commonalities are the result of shared human cognition and communicative needs. However, the ways these concepts are expressed, structured, and lexically encoded differ due to the distinct historical trajectories, cultural environments, and linguistic systems of each language.

The English lexicon is known for its richness, flexibility, and high level of lexical borrowing, particularly from Latin, French, and Greek. These borrowings were largely the result of historical events such as the Norman Conquest, the Renaissance, and colonial expansion. As a result, English often contains several synonyms with slightly different registers or connotations (e.g., kingly, royal, regal). In contrast, the Uzbek lexicon reflects deep layers of interaction with Arabic, Persian, Russian, and increasingly, English, especially in modern terminologies. Its agglutinative structure and cultural context shape how new words are formed and adopted.

This study focuses on two major layers of the lexicon: the professional (terminological) lexicon, which includes vocabulary used in specialized domains like medicine, law, and technology; and the traditional lexicon, which includes words related to customs, kinship, nature, and everyday

life rooted in national identity and collective memory. Analyzing these two layers provides a well-rounded picture of lexical similarities and contrasts between English and Uzbek.

The aim of this research is to explore the linguistic foundations—especially morphological, semantic, and cultural aspects—that underlie these similarities and differences. By examining representative examples from both languages, the paper aims to contribute to comparative linguistics and provide implications for translation studies, language learning, and intercultural communication.

Literature review

The significance of lexical structure and its cultural underpinnings has been a focus within the field of comparative linguistics. Scholars have long argued that vocabulary, more than any other component of language, carries the cultural, historical, and social memory of a people. This literature review explores key theoretical perspectives and previous research relevant to the cultural layers of the English and Uzbek lexicons. One of the foundational theories in this area is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which posits that language both reflects and shapes cultural cognition (Whorf, 1956). According to this view, lexical categories in a language mirror the worldview and social structures of its speakers. This theory has been particularly influential in examining how culturally embedded words encode values, traditions, and social norms. In the context of English, Baugh and Cable (2002) provide a comprehensive historical overview of the English language, demonstrating how its lexicon evolved through successive layers of cultural contact. The impact of Latin during the Christianization of England, the extensive influence of Norman French, and the Renaissance borrowings from classical languages each contributed to shaping English as a lexically rich and stratified language. Scholars such as Crystal [2;45.] emphasize the ongoing lexical dynamism of English, which continuously absorbs vocabulary due to globalization, technology, and mass media.

Uzbek, as a Turkic language, has received considerable attention in studies of lexical borrowing and cultural exchange, particularly in the works of scholars like Rahmonov (2015) and Ahmedov (2010). These researchers highlight how the Uzbek lexicon reflects distinct historical phases: early Turkic roots, deep integration of Arabic and Persian vocabulary during the Islamic era, and the introduction of Russian and Soviet terminologies in the 19th–20th centuries. Uzbek linguistic scholarship also underscores the symbolic function of certain lexemes in preserving national identity and cultural heritage, especially in oral tradition and folklore.

Methods

Comparative and descriptive-analytical approach to investigate the similarities and differences in the lexical layers of English and Uzbek, with particular emphasis on professional and traditional lexicons. The methodology is based on qualitative data analysis, involving several interrelated steps: data collection, classification, contextual analysis, and comparative evaluation.

This findings based on a comparative-descriptive and qualitative linguistic approach, focusing on the analysis of lexical layers within the English and Uzbek languages. The research particularly investigates how cultural elements have influenced the stratification and development of vocabulary in both languages. Considering that lexicon is one of the most culturally sensitive components of language, this study attempts to uncover the interplay between cultural values,

historical experiences, and lexical formation across two linguistically and culturally distinct societies.

In this research, the notion of lexical layering refers to the classification of vocabulary based on origin, historical period, semantic field, and cultural relevance. Lexical layers include native words, borrowed elements, archaic forms, dialectal expressions, neologisms, and culturally specific lexicon. Each of these layers is examined in the context of the cultural realities that gave rise to them or shaped their development.

Analysis and results

In English, the comparative analysis conducted in this study reveals distinct patterns in the lexical stratification of English and Uzbek, each shaped by their unique historical, religious, and sociopolitical developments. The structure of both languages' vocabularies demonstrates clear lexical layering, reflecting the cultural and historical interactions each has undergone. The lexicon is characterized by a prominent layer consisting of native Germanic words, Old French (Norman) borrowings, and Latin/Greek terms. This structure reflects the linguistic history of England, particularly the Norman Conquest in 1066 and the Renaissance period. For instance, everyday terms like king, bread, and night represent the native Anglo-Saxon layer. In contrast, more formal or abstract words such as monarch, justice, and philosophy stem from Latin and Greek origins. This lexical distribution often reflects register differences, with native terms used in colloquial speech and Latinate forms used in legal, scientific, and academic discourse.

By contrast, Uzbek presents a different layering scheme. The native Turkic core of the Uzbek language includes words such as ona (mother), daryo (river), and qor (snow). These terms are essential to daily life and have been preserved for centuries. The Arabic and Persian lexical layer—including words like ilm (knowledge), taqvo (piety), and adab (manners)—entered the language during the Islamic Golden Age, primarily through religious and literary channels. The Russian lexical layer, including terms like traktor, poyezd, and muallim, appeared during the Soviet period and reflects political and technological change. More recently, English borrowings such as kompyuter, internet, and marketing show the influence of globalization on modern Uzbek vocabulary.

The results of this comparative analysis confirm that both languages have undergone lexical enrichment through external cultural contact. However, the nature of these contacts differs: English absorbed foreign vocabulary primarily through conquest and intellectual movements, while Uzbek incorporated external lexicon through religious, imperial, and technological influence. Despite these differences, in both cases, the borrowed vocabulary became deeply integrated and now functions as a natural part of everyday communication.

Discussions

The findings of this study illustrate that the comparative analysis of English and Uzbek lexical structures reveals that both languages embody deep cultural imprints within their vocabularies. These lexical layers are not mere linguistic accidents, but reflective of historical, social, and ideological transformations experienced by the respective speech communities. As stated, "language is a cultural institution in itself, and its vocabulary is a reflection of collective experience." [1; 89].

In English, the presence of native Germanic roots coexisting with Latinate and French-derived vocabulary points to a long history of conquest, intellectual development, and class stratification. The use of synonyms with varying registers (e.g., *ask-inquire*, *help-assist*) highlights how cultural and political power relations have shaped English vocabulary over centuries [4; 115]. This layering makes English a highly nuanced and register-sensitive language, where word choice can reflect a speaker's education, formality, or social background.

Conversely, the lexical structure of Uzbek illustrates the influence of different historical stages, particularly Islamic civilization and Soviet rule. The integration of Arabic and Persian loanwords into core Uzbek vocabulary was not merely linguistic but also deeply cultural, bringing with them concepts of religion, philosophy, and social organization. Words like *ilm*, *hikmat*, and *adolat* (justice) were carriers of Islamic knowledge systems, and their continued use today reflects a persistent cultural orientation. As Fishman noted, "the lexicon of a language often functions as a storehouse of traditional values and beliefs." [3; 154].

The more recent Russian and English lexical borrowings in Uzbek show a shift toward modernization, technology, and global discourse. Interestingly, many of these borrowed terms are phonologically assimilated (*kompyuter*, *televideniye*), but are sometimes accompanied by native alternatives, reflecting a tension between cultural preservation and practical necessity.

This contrast demonstrates the different ideological attitudes toward language change in the two societies. English, being a global *lingua franca*, embraces innovation and lexical fluidity, allowing the creation of thousands of neologisms each year [5; 77]. Uzbek, on the other hand, shows a degree of linguistic conservatism, especially in literary and formal contexts, where native forms are often preferred or revived, particularly in post-independence language policies [9.32].

Moreover, the research indicates that both languages possess cultural untranslatability—words or expressions that are difficult to render in the other language due to their cultural specificity. For example, the Uzbek word *dugona* (a culturally intimate female friendship) has no direct equivalent in English, and similarly, the English term *gentleman* carries social and historical meanings not easily captured in Uzbek. As Newmark explains, "cultural terms encode unique value systems and are frequently untranslatable without explanation." These examples emphasize how language both reflects and restricts cultural understanding. [3;56].

Conclusion

This comparative investigation into the lexical layers of English and Uzbek has revealed that the vocabulary of a language is not merely a communicative tool, but a cultural palimpsest—each word inscribed with traces of history, ideology, and identity. Both English and Uzbek exhibit deeply stratified lexical systems, yet the cultural narratives behind these strata differ significantly, reflecting the unique trajectories of each language community. In English, the co-existence of Germanic, Latin, and French lexical elements speaks to centuries of conquest, scholarly expansion, and social hierarchy. The lexical richness of English has facilitated its global adaptability, allowing it to express both abstract thought and everyday interaction with remarkable flexibility. Uzbek, in contrast, demonstrates a more deliberate lexical evolution: from its Turkic origins, through the absorption of Islamic and Persian cultural values, to Soviet-era

technical borrowings, and now to the pressures of globalization. Each wave of lexical change in Uzbek is closely linked to shifts in political power, religious influence, and identity negotiation.

What emerges from this study is the powerful role that culture plays in shaping not only what languages say, but how they mean. Lexical layers are not neutral additions; they carry the weight of worldviews. Words such as *ilm*, *adab*, or *gentleman* are more than definitions in a dictionary—they are vessels of tradition, behavior, and collective memory. This reinforces the view of language as “a mirror of culture”[6;121], and lexicon as the most immediate reflection of that mirror.

From a broader perspective, this research contributes to the growing field of comparative lexicology and cultural linguistics, emphasizing the importance of viewing language as a living, historically grounded entity. It also highlights the value of preserving linguistic diversity, as each language encodes a unique vision of the world.

Future research might extend this comparative framework to other Turkic or Indo-European languages, or explore how digital media and migration are reshaping lexical layers in real time. Ultimately, the lexicon is where language breathes history—and in comparing it across cultures, we discover not only difference, but also profound human commonality.

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