

**LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF DISEASE NAMES OF IRANIAN ORIGIN IN THE  
UZBEK LANGUAGE**

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**Abstract**

This article analyzes disease names in the Uzbek language that originate from Iranian languages, particularly Persian and Tajik. The research examines the etymology, semantic motivation, and linguistic features of several disease names such as *gul*, *zaxm*, *pes*, *saramas*, *so'zak*. The study shows that these lexical units entered the Uzbek language through long-term cultural and linguistic interaction and later underwent phonetic, semantic, and morphological adaptation. The analysis reveals that many disease names are formed based on the symptoms of diseases, external characteristics, or historical linguistic influences. The results contribute to understanding the development of medical terminology in the Uzbek language and demonstrate the relationship between language, culture, and medical knowledge.

**Keywords**

medical terminology, disease names, Iranian languages, etymology, linguistic analysis, semantics, Uzbek language

**Introduction**

The development of the Uzbek language has been strongly influenced by long-term contact with various neighboring languages, particularly Persian-Tajik, Arabic, and later Russian. These linguistic interactions have played a significant role in enriching the vocabulary of Uzbek and shaping many lexical layers of the language. One of the areas where this influence is especially noticeable is medical terminology, including the names of diseases. Disease names often reflect not only medical knowledge but also cultural perceptions, historical experience, and linguistic processes. Many disease names used in the Uzbek language have been borrowed from Iranian languages, particularly Persian and Tajik, as a result of historical, cultural, and scientific interactions between these linguistic communities. Over time, these borrowed terms have undergone phonetic, semantic, and morphological adaptation within the Uzbek language. The study of such lexical units is important for understanding the formation of medical terminology as well as the historical development of the Uzbek lexicon. An etymological and semantic analysis of disease names allows researchers to identify the linguistic sources of these terms and to reveal the mechanisms of lexical borrowing and adaptation. This article therefore examines several disease names of Iranian origin in the Uzbek language, including *gul*, *zaxm*, *pes*, *saramas*, and *so'zak*. Their etymology, semantic development, and linguistic features are analyzed in order to demonstrate how Iranian loanwords have contributed to the formation of medical vocabulary in Uzbek. For example, the word *gul*, which historically belongs to Iranian languages, functions as a noun. In the Persian–Russian dictionary it appears in the form *gol*, while in the Tajik–Russian dictionary it is recorded as *gul*. This lexical unit entered the Uzbek language through Tajik. Originally, the word *gul* denotes the reproductive part of a plant consisting of petals, stamens, and the calyx, and generally refers to a “flower” or “blossom.” However, as a result of semantic development, this noun acquired an additional meaning. In this sense, *gul* refers to a “red rash” appearing on the human body and is associated with diseases such as measles and rubella. In medical usage, *gul* (measles) is an acute infectious disease characterized by an increase in body temperature, inflammation of the upper respiratory tract and eye mucous membranes, as well as the appearance of large red rashes on the skin. Measles is one of the most widespread viral infections in the world and can affect people of all ages, although it is most

common among children. The disease is seasonal and occurs more frequently during autumn, winter, and spring.

Another disease name of Iranian origin is *zaxm*. This noun is considered a homonym and is explained with several meanings in the explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language. *Zaxm* is borrowed from Persian and denotes meanings such as “blow,” “wound,” or “injury.” It refers to physical damage inflicted on the body by sharp objects such as a sword or spear. For example: “Look at the young man boasting without ever experiencing the wounds and strikes of arrows and swords,” said Temirtosh ironically to Hojib (M. Osim, *O‘tror*). The disease name *pes* is also borrowed from the Persian language. In its original meaning, it conveys notions such as “unclean” or “impure.” In medical terminology, however, it refers to a skin condition characterized by white patches on the skin, commonly associated with leprosy or pigment deficiency. In medical usage, *pes* denotes white spots that appear on the skin as a result of a lack of pigmentation. For example, in Uzbek literary sources the term is used in the following context: “*Kuymuchida tangadek pesi bor.*” — “It is not *pes*, it is merely the mark of a wound” (A. Qahhor, *Qo‘shchinor chiroqlari*). The word *pes* can also refer to a person suffering from this disease. For instance, in Sadridin Ayni’s memoirs (*Esdaliklar*), it is mentioned that the water from a well located near a cemetery was believed to have healing properties and was used mainly by sick people, especially those suffering from *pes* and eye diseases. In addition, in colloquial usage the term may function as a vulgar expression meaning “worthless” or “despicable,” often used metaphorically in everyday speech and literary texts. The word *pes* is also found in Uzbek folk proverbs. One example is: “Pes pes bilan qorong‘uda topishar.”

This proverb is synonymous with another Uzbek proverb, “*Ko‘r ko‘rni qorong‘uda topadi,*” meaning that people tend to associate with others who are similar to themselves in character, behavior, or social position. Another proverb states: “Pes pesni topar, suv pastni.” This proverb conveys the same idea that individuals often choose companions whose character and qualities resemble their own. The disease name *saramas* is borrowed from the Persian language and belongs to the group of disease names containing the component *sar*. In Persian, the word *sar* has several meanings, including “head,” “beginning,” “top,” “summit,” and “the best.” This lexical element has been widely used in Persian literature and language. The term *saramas* is derived from the meaning of *sar* as “head” and can be interpreted as “swollen head.” In medical terminology, it refers to an acute infectious skin disease characterized by inflammation of the skin, most commonly affecting the area around the nose and sometimes the mucous membranes. The disease spreads rapidly and is accompanied by symptoms such as high fever and redness of the affected skin area.

According to the *National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan* (Tashkent, 2003), when symptoms of *saramas* are suspected, it is necessary to consult a physician immediately. The famous scholar Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) also mentioned this disease in his well-known medical work *The Canon of Medicine*. In this work, he described the different forms of the disease and suggested methods for its treatment. Ibn Sina characterized *saramas* as an infectious skin disease marked by high fever, inflamed redness of the skin with clearly defined edges, and rapid spread of the infection. In some cases, Ibn Sina also used this term to refer to a form of rubella occurring in young children. The noun *so‘zak* is recorded in Persian–Russian dictionaries in the form *suzak*, while in Tajik–Russian dictionaries it appears as *so‘zoq*. The term entered the Uzbek language through Tajik with a phonetic change, where the vowel *o* was replaced by *a*. The word is formed from a root meaning “pain” with the addition of the suffix *-ak*. In medical terminology, it denotes a sexually transmitted infectious disease characterized by inflammation of the urinary tract (Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, Moscow, 1981, Vol. I–II). The lexeme *so‘zak* (gonorrhea, also known as tripper) was borrowed from Tajik into Uzbek with certain phonetic modifications and functions as the general name for an

infectious venereal disease caused by gonococci. The disease most often develops as a result of unprotected or casual sexual contact. Consequently, the urinary tract and reproductive organs are primarily affected. From a linguistic perspective, the word *so'zak* functions as a homonymous lexeme: *So'zak* – a medical term referring to a sexually transmitted disease characterized by inflammation of the urinary tract. For example: “*The patient admitted to the hospital was diagnosed with so'zak.*” The study of disease names of Iranian origin is of great theoretical and practical importance for linguistics. The research demonstrates that many disease names in the Uzbek language have been borrowed from Iranian languages, particularly Persian and Tajik. Over a long historical period, these lexical units have undergone various semantic, phonetic, and morphological changes within the Uzbek linguistic system. For example, the word *sil* (tuberculosis) is borrowed from Persian and originally carried the meaning of “spreading” or “flowing.” This meaning is directly related to the nature of the disease, which gradually spreads throughout the body. Similarly, terms such as *istisqo* (a disease associated with abdominal pain or fluid accumulation) also have their semantic roots in Iranian languages. The naming of such medical terms is often based on the symptoms of the disease, its external appearance, or the factors that cause it. From a linguistic perspective, these naming principles become especially evident through etymological analysis, which reveals the historical and semantic foundations of medical terminology in the Uzbek language. The name of the disease *sil* (tuberculosis) is also reflected in Uzbek folklore and proverbs, where it symbolizes both physical and psychological conditions and demonstrates the influence of illness on human life and destiny. One well-known Uzbek proverb states: “*Ichga yutgan dard kishini sil qilar*” (“Suppressed sorrow causes tuberculosis”) (Mirzayev T., Sarimsoqov B., *Uzbek Folk Proverbs*, Vol. I, Tashkent: Fan Publishing House, 1987). This proverb suggests that emotional pain or sorrow that is kept inside and not openly expressed may eventually lead to serious illnesses, including tuberculosis. Through this expression, the proverb emphasizes that suppressing emotional or psychological burdens and avoiding sharing them with others may result in negative consequences for human health. The meaning of the proverb implies that unresolved emotional distress and psychological suffering can contribute to physical illnesses and serious health problems. At the same time, it encourages individuals not to suppress their problems but rather to seek solutions and discuss their difficulties with others. Thus, the proverb highlights the close relationship between psychological well-being and physical health. From a linguistic perspective, disease names borrowed from Iranian languages reflect antiquity and historical continuity within the lexical layer of the Uzbek language. Most of these words have been actively used in everyday spoken language, which has contributed to their stable integration into the Uzbek linguistic system. Furthermore, they have undergone phonetic adaptation and have become fully adjusted to the pronunciation and morphological norms of the Uzbek language.

Therefore, the linguistic study of disease names of Iranian origin not only helps to identify the sources and formation mechanisms of medical terminology but also allows for a deeper understanding of the historical development of the Uzbek language. Such research contributes to the advancement of etymological, semantic, and contact linguistics studies and provides valuable insights into the interaction between languages.

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