

**PERSIAN BORROWED AFFIXES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE:  
A LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION**

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**Abstract**

The Uzbek language, a member of the Turkic family, has undergone extensive lexical and morphological enrichment through historical contact with Persian (including Tajik-Persian varieties). This study examines Persian-derived affixes—primarily derivational suffixes and a smaller set of prefixes—that have integrated into Uzbek word-formation processes. Drawing on etymological, morphological, and corpus-based analysis, the research identifies key borrowed affixes, classifies them by function (derivational vs. relational), and evaluates their productivity in contemporary Uzbek. Results demonstrate that Persian affixes such as “-bon”, “-gar”, “-boz”, “-mand”, “-xona”, “-iy(ya)t”, “be-“, and “ser-“ actively contribute to noun, adjective, and abstract noun formation, often hybridizing with native Turkic stems. These elements not only expand the lexicon but also reflect deep cultural-linguistic integration shaped by centuries of Persian influence in Central Asia. The findings underscore the role of language contact in morphological evolution and highlight implications for Uzbek lexicography, language policy, and comparative Turkic-Iranian linguistics.

The Uzbek language, belonging to the Karluk branch of the Turkic family, has historically served as a medium of communication across Central Asia, absorbing substantial lexical and morphological material from neighboring languages. Among these, Persian (Farsi-Tajik) has exerted a particularly profound influence due to centuries of political, cultural, religious, and economic interaction, beginning with the Samanid dynasty (9th–10th centuries) and continuing through the Islamic Golden Age, Timurid period, and into the modern era. Persian functioned as a lingua franca for administration, literature, science, and trade, resulting in the borrowing of not only individual lexemes but also productive affixes that have become embedded in Uzbek morphology.

This contact-induced change is evident in both the lexicon (e.g., “kitob” “book,” “adabiyot” “literature”) and grammar, where Persian affixes facilitate the derivation of new words and the expression of nuanced semantic categories absent or less productive in native Turkic patterns. Unlike purely inflectional affixes typical of Turkic agglutination (e.g., case markers “-ni”, “-ga”), Persian borrowings are predominantly derivational, enabling the creation of agent nouns, locatives, abstracts, and adjectives. The present study focuses on these “o‘zlashma affikslar” (borrowed affixes), their morphological roles, and their contribution to Uzbek’s lexical and cultural enrichment. It addresses the following research questions: (1) Which Persian affixes have been productively integrated into Uzbek? (2) How do they interact with native stems in word formation? (3) What is their linguistic and sociocultural significance? By expanding upon preliminary observations of Persian influence (e.g., the adjectival “-iy” in “ilmiy” “scientific” from Arabic “ilm” via Persian mediation, or abstract “-iyat” formations).

This investigation adopts a qualitative, descriptive-comparative linguistic approach combined with etymological and morphological analysis. Data were drawn from multiple sources to ensure robustness and replicability:

1. Corpus and lexicographic materials: Examination of modern Uzbek dictionaries (e.g., “O‘zbek tilining izohli lug‘ati”), literary texts from classical to contemporary periods (Navoiy, modern prose), and digital corpora of spoken and written Uzbek.

2. Etymological verification: Cross-referencing with historical linguistics resources on Persian-Tajik influence, including studies of affix borrowing in Turkic-Iranian contact zones.

3. Morphological parsing: Systematic segmentation of words into roots and affixes, distinguishing native Turkic elements from Persian-derived ones using criteria such as productivity, semantic transparency, and hybrid formation patterns (e.g., native stem + borrowed affix).

4. Classification: Affixes were categorized following standard morphological typology—primarily derivational (word-forming) rather than inflectional (grammatical case)—with subdivisions into agentive, locative, abstract, adjectival, and negative/quantitative types. Productivity was assessed by frequency of occurrence with native vs. borrowed stems and stylistic distribution (formal, literary, colloquial).

5. Comparative analysis: Juxtaposition with native Uzbek affixes (e.g., “-chi”, “-lik”) to highlight functional overlap or complementarity.

The study is corpus-driven yet interpretive, avoiding quantitative statistical modeling in favor of detailed exemplification and contextual interpretation. Limitations include reliance on standard literary Uzbek (less dialectal variation) and the challenge of disentangling Persian from Arabic mediation in some cases (e.g., “-iy”).

Analysis reveals a substantial inventory of Persian-derived affixes that have been conventionalized in Uzbek, functioning productively in word formation. These fall into two main functional groups, as noted in preliminary observations: relational/adjectival (“kelishik”) and derivational (“yasalish”) affixes. However, linguistic classification refines this to derivational (the dominant type) and limited relational uses.

#### 1. Derivational Suffixes

- Agentive/occupational: “-bon” (guardian/protector): “bog‘bon” “gardener” (“bog” “garden” + “-bon”); “-gar” (doer/maker): “savdogar” “trader” (“savdo” “trade” + “-gar”); “-boz” (player/enthusiast): “qimorboz” “playful person” (“qimor” “game” + “-boz”).

- Locative/place: “-xona” (house/place of): “kitobxona” “library” (“kitob” “book” + “-xona”); “-gah” (place/time): “damgah” “resting place.”

- Possessive/qualitative: “-mand” (possessing): “hunarmand” “skilled artisan” (“hunar” “skill” + “-mand”).

- Adjectival/relational: “-iy” (pertaining to): “ilmiy” “scientific” (“ilm” “knowledge” + “-iy”); often extends to abstract nouns via “-iyat”: formations denoting qualities or fields (e.g., adaptations of “mahalla” “neighborhood” yielding context-specific abstracts like community-related terms).

- Diminutive: “-ak” (small/inferior): productive in lexical items indicating affection or diminution.

## 2. Derivational Prefixes (less numerous but productive)

- “be-“ (without/lacking): “befarq” “indifferent” (“farq” “difference”); “bevaqt” “untimely.”

- “ser-“ (full of/many): “serquyosh” “sunny” (“quyosh” “sun”); “serhosil” “productive.”

- “no-“ (negative): “noma’lum” “unknown.”

Hybrid Formation and Productivity – Persian affixes frequently attach to both Persian-Arabic loans and native Turkic stems (e.g., “qimorboz”, “bog‘bon”), demonstrating full integration. Examples from the original observations, such as “ilmiy” and community-related “-iyat” derivatives, align with these patterns and illustrate how borrowed elements fill semantic gaps in administration, education, and social organization. Productivity is highest in literary and formal registers, with some affixes (e.g., “-gar”, “-xona”) extending into everyday speech.

The integration of Persian affixes exemplifies classic language-contact phenomena: borrowing occurs when donor-language elements satisfy structural and semantic needs in the recipient language. In Uzbek, Persian affixes complement the agglutinative Turkic system by providing concise means for abstraction, agency, and location—categories that native resources handle less efficiently in certain domains. This has enriched Uzbek’s morphological inventory without disrupting core Turkic typology.

Linguistically, these affixes participate in hybrid word formation, accelerating lexical expansion during periods of cultural flourishing (e.g., Timurid Renaissance). Culturally, they encode Persian-influenced concepts of social hierarchy, knowledge (“ilmiy”), community (“mahalla”-related), and craftsmanship, thereby transmitting values of scholarship, hospitality, and organized society. The process reflects “linguistic convergence” in the Turkic-Iranian zone, where Uzbek has absorbed Iranian morphological patterns more deeply than, for example, Kazakh.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, such borrowings underscore Uzbek’s historical role as a bridge language. In the modern era, they support scientific and administrative terminology while raising questions of language purity in post-Soviet standardization efforts. Future research could quantify productivity via large-scale corpora or examine generational shifts in affix usage.

Persian borrowed affixes occupy a central position in Uzbek morphology, serving as vital tools for derivation, semantic expansion, and cultural expression. Through systematic analysis, this study has documented their classification, productivity, and integrative mechanisms, confirming their enduring contribution to the language’s vitality. The findings affirm that language contact is not merely lexical but fundamentally morphological, shaping Uzbek’s evolutionary trajectory. Continued scholarly attention to these phenomena will enhance our understanding of Central Asian linguistic dynamics and support informed language planning.

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