Loanwords and Calques in Uzbek Philosophical Terminology: Influence of Arabic, Persian, And Russian

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Abstract: The Uzbek language, shaped by centuries of historical contact and cultural exchange, offers a rich field for exploring the intersection of language and philosophy. As a dynamic and evolving linguistic system, Uzbek has absorbed numerous loanwords and calques—notably from Arabic, Persian, Russian, and English—each marking a distinct phase in its socio-cultural development. This study investigates how such borrowings have not only expanded the philosophical lexicon of Uzbek but also reflect deeper patterns of cultural interaction, linguistic adaptation, and historical transformation.

Introduction: The Uzbek language, with its deep historical roots and dynamic socio-cultural evolution, offers a compelling lens through which to explore the intricate interplay between language and philosophy.

This work investigates how Uzbek has assimilated a diverse array of loanwords and calques—primarily from Arabic, Persian, Russian, and, more recently, English—and examines how these linguistic elements have enriched its philosophical lexicon. By tracing the routes of lexical borrowing from religious, cultural, and technical domains, this study not only sheds light on the natural evolution of the Uzbek language but also highlights the enduring influence of external intellectual traditions on Uzbek philosophical discourse.

At its core, the research underscores the significance of linguistic adaptation as both a mechanism for cultural exchange and a mirror of historical processes. The assimilation of Arabic terms during the Islamization of Central Asia, for instance, provided a foundational vocabulary for religious and philosophical thought, while Persian contributions infused the language with a poetic and culturally nuanced dimension. The extensive adoption of Russian terminology during the Soviet era further illustrates how shifts in political power and modernization imperatives can reshape a language's expressive capacity. Additionally, the strategic creation of calques has enabled Uzbek speakers to internalize and adapt modern concepts, ensuring that the language remains both relevant and uniquely resonant in a globalized world.

This exploration is pivotal for both linguists and philosophers. For linguists, it presents a multifaceted case study of language contact, lexical diffusion, and morphological adaptation, offering insights into the processes that govern linguistic change. For philosophers, the work illuminates how language functions as a repository and conduit for abstract ideas, providing a richer understanding of how philosophical concepts are communicated and transformed through cultural exchange. In essence, this study not only documents a significant aspect of Uzbek linguistic heritage but also contributes to broader discussions on the evolution of language in response to both historical forces and contemporary challenges.

METHOD

The Uzbek language, shaped by a history of territorial, cultural, and religious contact, contains a rich stratum of borrowed vocabulary—particularly from Arabic, Persian, Russian, and more recently, English. Loanwords, as observed by Davlyatova and Kholmatova (2022), have long served as a natural mechanism for enriching the Uzbek lexicon, often accompanying the introduction of new objects, practices, and abstract

concepts. Arabicisms notably entered the language during the Islamization of Central Asia, embedding themselves in religious, philosophical, and administrative discourse. These terms, such as falsafa (philosophy), ilm (science), and jannat (paradise), became deeply integrated into the linguistic and intellectual fabric of Uzbek society.

Unlike Arabic borrowings—typically introduced via literary and religious texts—Persian words often entered through direct trade and daily interaction, resulting in a blend of poetic, domestic, and material cultural vocabulary. Russian influences, meanwhile, became prominent during the Soviet period, especially in scientific, technical, and administrative terminology. While many of these loanwords were initially resisted or replaced during post-independence language reforms, they remain integral to modern Uzbek philosophical and academic discourse. The adaptation process involves morphophonological assimilation, semantic narrowing or expansion, and, at times, the creation of calques—translated equivalents modeled on the structure of the donor language.

In their study, Mukhammadiev and Mukhammadieva (2022) examine the incorporation of English loanwords into the Uzbek language, highlighting the influence of globalization and technological advancement. They analyze the phonological and morphological adaptations these loanwords undergo to conform to Uzbek linguistic norms. The authors also discuss the sociolinguistic factors driving the adoption of English vocabulary, such as media exposure, educational exchanges, and international communication. This research provides valuable insights into the dynamic evolution of the Uzbek lexicon in response to external linguistic influences.

Nurmuhamedova (2024) conducts a comparative analysis of loanwords in Russian and Uzbek, focusing on their historical development and the sociolinguistic factors influencing lexical borrowing. The study highlights that both languages have incorporated foreign terms to fill lexical gaps, particularly in areas such as technology, governance, and culture. Russian has assimilated words from languages like French, German, and English, while Uzbek has integrated terms from Arabic, Persian, Russian, and more recently, English. The research underscores the role of historical events, such as colonization and globalization, in shaping the lexicons of both languages. Additionally, it examines the phonological and morphological adaptations that borrowed words undergo to conform to the linguistic norms of the recipient language.

In her article, Kholikova (2023) provides an in-depth examination of how borrowed words from Persian-Tajik, Arabic, and Russian entered and assimilated into the Uzbek lexicon. One of the most significant factors she identifies is the phenomenon of bilingualism, which emerged as a result of historical contact and cohabitation with speakers of these languages. The author explains that such linguistic interaction did not only involve territorial proximity but also mutual influence and cooperation, which created the sociolinguistic conditions necessary for lexical transfer.

The paper details how borrowed words initially appear as neologisms but gradually undergo phonetic, morphological, and semantic adaptation, eventually becoming indistinguishable from native words. Examples include andisha, barg, shabnam (from Persian), adabiyot, kitob, ustoz (from Arabic), and gazeta, bank, televideniye (from Russian). Kholikova emphasizes that foreign words often adapt so well that their origin is no longer detectable without etymological analysis.

The Uzbek language, according to the study, has historically relied on both internal and external lexical sources. While internal developments contribute to the natural growth of vocabulary, the influence of external sources—especially through social, cultural, and political interactions—has significantly enriched it. Today, borrowed words make up over 40% of the Uzbek lexicon, with Russian-origin terms accounting for approximately 26%. Kholikova concludes that lexical borrowing is a natural and necessary aspect of linguistic evolution, reflecting both historical realities and contemporary needs.

In their study, Ergasheva and Rakhmatova (2023) examine the complexities involved in translating English loanwords into Uzbek. They highlight that the increasing influx of English terms, particularly in fields like technology, science, and culture, poses challenges for accurate translation and assimilation. The authors discuss issues such as semantic mismatches, lack of equivalent terms, and the risk of misinterpretation. They emphasize the importance of developing standardized translation practices and enhancing linguistic resources to facilitate the effective integration of English loanwords into the Uzbek language.

In her article, Haziyeva (2020) examines various approaches to the phenomenon of terminological borrowing via calquing, emphasizing its significance in linguistic development. The study highlights that calquing—translating foreign terms literally into the native language—is a prevalent method for incorporating new concepts, especially when direct equivalents are absent. Haziyeva analyzes theoretical

aspects of calquing and its relationship to translation processes, noting that while calquing preserves semantic integrity, it often sparks debate regarding its classification as borrowing or translation. The article also reviews differing scholarly opinions within Azerbaijani linguistics, illustrating the complexity and ongoing discourse surrounding calquing's role in language evolution.

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Statistical Overview and Linguistic Trends

A statistical analysis of the loanwords and calques in Uzbek philosophical terminology reveals the following trends:

Arabic Loanwords: Historically dominant, these terms form the foundation of Uzbek philosophical discourse, especially in religious and intellectual contexts.

Persian Loanwords: Reflecting the cultural and literary heritage, these terms enrich the Uzbek language, particularly in artistic and poetic expressions.

Russian Loanwords: A significant influence during the Soviet era, these terms are prevalent in technical, scientific, and administrative domains.

English Loanwords: Increasingly prevalent in contemporary discourse, especially in technology, business, and global communication.

Calques: Demonstrating the adaptability of the Uzbek language, calques are employed to express modern concepts using native vocabulary.

This distribution underscores the historical layers of linguistic influence in Uzbekistan and highlights the ongoing evolution of its philosophical terminology.

Figure 1.

Language	Term	Original Word	Meaning
Arabic	Ilm	علم	Knowledge
	Hikmat	حكمة	Wisdom
	Falsafa	فلسفة	Philosophy
	Adabiyot	أدبيات	Literature
	Ilm-fan	علم-فن	Science and Art
	Iymon	إيمان	Faith
Persian	Adab	ادب	Etiquette
	Fikr	فكر	Thought
	Doston	داستان	Story
	She'r	شعر	Poetry
	Rivojlanish	رشد	Development
	Yordam	ياری	Help
	Oila	خانواده	Family
	Yigit	پسر	Young man
Russian	Operatsiya	операция	Operation
	Kompyuter	компьютер	Computer
	Teatr	театр	Theater
	Muzey	музей	Museum
	Kino	кино	Cinema

Language	Term	Original Word	Meaning
	Avtobus	автобус	Bus
	Universitet	университет	University
	Institut	институт	Institute
	Laboratoriya	лаборатория	Laboratory
Calques	Ozini anglash	-	Self-realization
	Boshqaruv tizimi	-	Management System
	Ijtimoiy tarmoq	-	Social Network
	Axborot texnologiyalari	-	Information Technologies

Note: The calques listed are translations of foreign terms into Uzbek, aiming to convey modern concepts using native linguistic elements.

Figure 2. The proportion of recorded terms based on their origin.

Pie Chart

Calques 13.8% — 4
Arabic 24.1% — 7
Russian 34.5% — 10
Persian 27.6% — 8
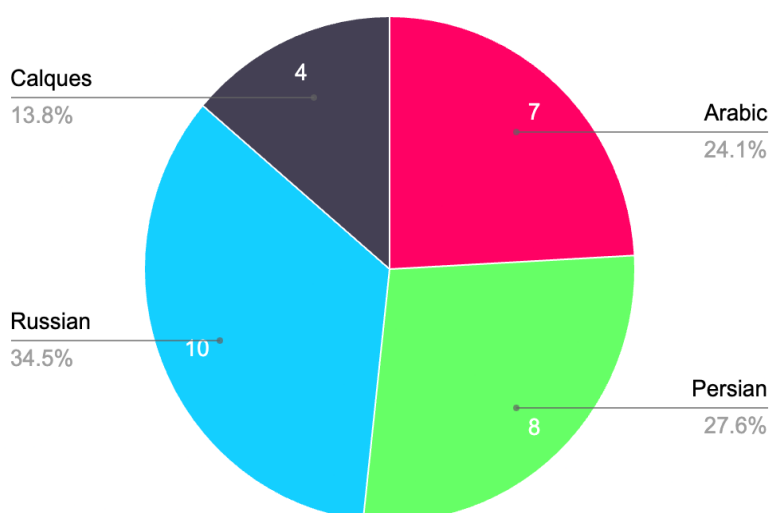
DISCUSSION

The evolution of Uzbek philosophical terminology through the incorporation of loanwords and calques from Arabic, Persian, Russian, and more recently, English, reflects the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and intellectual history. This discussion delves into the comparative aspects of these linguistic elements, examining their sources, adaptation processes, and the socio-political contexts that have influenced their integration into the Uzbek lexicon.

The Arabic language has profoundly shaped Uzbek philosophical terminology, particularly in religious, legal, and intellectual domains. Terms such as ilm' (knowledge), hikmat' (wisdom), and falsafa' (philosophy) are direct borrowings that have been assimilated into Uzbek, often retaining their original meanings and connotations. This influence is largely attributed to the spread of Islam and the subsequent Arabicization of Central Asian intellectual traditions.

Persian has contributed significantly to Uzbek's literary and artistic vocabulary. Words like adab (etiquette), fikr (thought), and she'r (poetry) underscore the cultural and literary ties between the regions. These borrowings reflect the historical prominence of Persian as a language of administration and culture in the region.

During the Soviet era, Russian became the lingua franca

of administration, science, and education in Uzbekistan. Consequently, numerous Russian terms entered the Uzbek language, especially in technical, scientific, and political contexts. Examples include kompyuter (computer), institut (institute), and laboratoriya (laboratory). These borrowings often underwent phonological and morphological adaptations to fit Uzbek linguistic patterns.

In recent decades, English has emerged as a dominant source of loanwords, particularly in the fields of technology, business, and global communication. Terms like internet, menejer (manager), and marketing have been adopted, often with minimal modification. This trend reflects Uzbekistan's increasing integration into the global economy and its efforts to modernize its educational and technological infrastructures.

The integration of loanwords into Uzbek involves various adaptation processes:

Phonological Adaptation: Loanwords are adjusted to fit the phonetic system of Uzbek. For instance, the Russian kompyuter' becomes kompyuter,' with slight modifications to align with Uzbek pronunciation norms.

Morphological Adaptation: Some loanwords undergo morphological changes to conform to Uzbek grammatical structures. For example, the Persian fikr' (thought) can combine with native Uzbek elements to form terms like fikr yuritmoq' (to think).

Semantic Shifts: Loanwords may acquire new meanings or nuances in the Uzbek context. The Arabic ilm' traditionally means knowledge,' but in modern usage, it can encompass scientific knowledge, reflecting the evolving nature of Uzbek intellectual discourse.

Calques, or loan translations, involve rendering foreign concepts into native linguistic forms. In Uzbek philosophical terminology, calques are employed to express modern or foreign ideas using native vocabulary. For instance:

O'zini anglash (self-realization) is a calque of the English term, constructed using Uzbek words to convey the concept.

Axborot texnologiyalari (information technologies) translates the English term directly into Uzbek, reflecting the global influence of technological discourse.

The integration of loanwords and calques into Uzbek is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a reflection of socio-political and cultural dynamics:

Colonial and Post-Colonial Contexts: The Russian influence during the Soviet era led to the incorporation of numerous Russian terms into Uzbek, particularly in administrative and technical fields. This period marked a significant shift in the linguistic landscape of Uzbekistan.

Globalization and Modernization: The recent influx of English loanwords corresponds with Uzbekistan's efforts to modernize its economy and educational systems. As the country engages more with global markets and international institutions, English has become a key source of new terminology.

Cultural Preservation: Despite the influx of foreign terms, there is a concerted effort to preserve and revitalize native Uzbek vocabulary. This is evident in the creation of calques and the adaptation of foreign terms to fit Uzbek linguistic structures.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the historical and cultural tapestry of Uzbekistan has engendered a rich, layered linguistic landscape wherein Arabic, Persian, Russian, and, more recently, English have each left their mark. From Arabic terms deeply rooted in religious and philosophical discourse to Persian words that underscore poetic and cultural traditions, and from Russian technical and administrative borrowings to modern English expressions that reflect globalization, this diverse lexical heritage has shaped Uzbek philosophical terminology in profound ways. The various studies discussed illustrate that these loanwords undergo a range of transformations—phonological, morphological, and semantic—while calques demonstrate how the language preserves its native identity by rendering foreign concepts into Uzbek.

 Moreover, shifting socio-political contexts, from Soviet influence to post-independence language reforms and ongoing globalization, have all influenced the paths along which foreign terms enter Uzbek usage. Together, these adaptations, whether direct borrowings or carefully crafted translations, underscore the resilience and dynamism of Uzbek. Ultimately, this interplay of internal and external linguistic forces not only enhances the expressive capacity of Uzbek philosophical discourse but also mirrors the broader cultural and intellectual evolutions that continue to shape the language today.

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