

ETYMOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF MUSICAL TERMS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PERSIAN-ARABIC AND RUSSIAN LAYERS: A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS WITH ENGLISH

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Turayev Alisher Ibragimovich

English Senior- Teacher, Renaissance Educational University

E-mail: turayevalisher86@gmail.com

Tel: (97) 4320624

О‘ЗБЕК ТИЛИДАГИ МУСИҚИЙ АТАМАЛАРНИНГ ЕТИМОЛОГИК ВА СЕМАНТИК ХУСУСИЯТЛАРИ: ФОРС-АРАБ ВА РУС ҚАТЛАМЛАРИ ТА‘СИРИДА (ИНГЛИЗ ТИЛИ БИЛАН СОЛИШТИРМА ТАҲЛИЛ)

ЭТИМОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ И СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ МУЗЫКАЛЬНЫХ ТЕРМИНОВ В УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ ПОД ВЛИЯНИЕМ ПЕРСИДСКО-АРАБСКОГО И РУССКОГО ПЛАСТОВ: СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ С АНГЛИЙСКИМ ЯЗЫКОМ

Annotation

Musical terminology vividly reflects the historical, cultural, and linguistic development of a nation. This study investigates the etymological origins and semantic features of musical terms in the Uzbek language, focusing on the significant influence of Persian-Arabic and Russian lexical layers. Through a contrastive linguistic approach, these terms are compared with their counterparts in English, which mainly derive from Latin, Greek, Italian, and French sources.

The research corpus consists of approximately 70 key musical terms covering instruments, modal systems, genres, and technical concepts. The analysis reveals that Persian-Arabic borrowings (e.g., *maqom*, *shashmaqom*, *tanbur*, *dutar*, *doira*, *rubob*) carry deep philosophical and spiritual connotations rooted in medieval Islamic and Sufi traditions. In contrast, Russian borrowings (e.g., *simfoniya*, *orkestr*, *akkord*, *dirizyor*, *tonalite*) reflect the Soviet-era introduction of Western classical music theory and modernization. English musical terminology, shaped primarily by European classical traditions, often lacks the profound cultural-philosophical depth inherent in Uzbek *maqom* concepts.

The findings demonstrate processes of lexical layering, semantic adaptation, and cultural borrowing in Uzbek musical vocabulary. This contrastive study contributes to contact linguistics, ethnomusicology, and terminology studies, while highlighting challenges in translating culturally specific musical terms between Eastern and Western linguistic traditions.

Keywords

musical terminology, Uzbek language, Persian-Arabic loanwords, Russian influence, etymology, semantic features, contrastive analysis, Shashmaqom, maqom system

Annotatsiya

Musiqiy terminologiya xalqning tarixiy, madaniy va lingvistik rivojini yorqin aks ettiradi. Ushbu tadqiqot o'zbek tilidagi musiqiy atamalarning etimologik kelib chiqishi va semantik xususiyatlarini o'rganadi, ayniqsa fors-arab va rus leksik qatlamlarining kuchli ta'siriga e'tibor qaratadi. Solishtirma lingvistik yondashuv asosida bu atamalar ingliz tilidagi ekvivalentlari bilan taqqoslanadi, ingliz tili esa asosan lotin, yunon, italyan va fransuz tillaridan olingan terminlarga asoslanadi.

Tadqiqot korpusi asboblari, modal tizimlar, janrlar va texnik tushunchalarni qamrab olgan taxminan 70 ta asosiy musiqiy atamadan iborat. Tahlil shuni ko'rsatadiki, fors-arab o'zlashmalari (*maqom, shashmaqom, tanbur, dutar, doira, rubob* va boshqalar) o'rta asrlar islomiy va tasavvufiy an'analari asoslangan chuqur falsafiy va ma'naviy ma'nolarga ega. Rus tilidan olingan atamalar (*simfoniya, orkestr, akkord, dirizyor, tonalite*) esa sovet davrida G'arb klassik musiqasi nazariyasining kiritilishi va modernizatsiyani aks ettiradi. Ingliz musiqiy terminologiyasi asosan Yevropa klassik an'analari ta'sirida shakllangan bo'lib, o'zbek *maqom* tushunchasidagi madaniy-falsafiy chuqurlikka ega emas.

Natijalar o'zbek musiqiy leksikasidagi qatlamlanish, semantik moslashuv va madaniy o'zlashuv jarayonlarini namoyon etadi. Ushbu solishtirma tadqiqot kontakt lingvistikasi, etnomuzikologiya va terminologiya fanlariga hissa qo'shadi hamda Sharq va G'arb tillari o'rtasida madaniy jihatdan bog'liq musiqiy atamalarni tarjima qilishdagi qiyinchiliklarni yoritadi.

Kalit so'zlar

musiqiy terminologiya, o'zbek tili, fors-arab o'zlashmalari, rus ta'siri, etimologiya, semantik xususiyatlar, solishtirma tahlil, shashmaqom, maqom tizimi

Аннотация

Музыкальная терминология ярко отражает историческое, культурное и лингвистическое развитие народа. Данное исследование изучает этимологическое происхождение и семантические особенности музыкальных терминов в узбекском языке с особым вниманием к значительному влиянию персидско-арабского и русского лексических пластов. С помощью сопоставительного лингвистического подхода эти термины сравниваются с их английскими эквивалентами, которые преимущественно происходят из латинского, греческого, итальянского и французского источников.

Корпус исследования состоит примерно из 70 ключевых музыкальных терминов, охватывающих инструменты, модальные системы, жанры и технические понятия. Анализ показывает, что персидско-арабские заимствования (например, *маком*, *шашмаком*, *танбур*, *дутар*, *доира*, *рубоб*) несут глубокие философские и духовные коннотации, уходящие корнями в средневековые исламские и суфийские традиции. Русские заимствования (*симфония*, *оркестр*, *аккорд*, *дирижёр*, *тональность*) отражают введение западной классической музыки и модернизацию в советский период. Английская музыкальная терминология, сформированная главным образом европейскими классическими традициями, часто не обладает той культурно-философской глубиной, которая присуща узбекскому понятию *маком*.

Результаты демонстрируют процессы лексического наслоения, семантической адаптации и культурного заимствования в узбекской музыкальной лексике. Данное сопоставительное исследование вносит вклад в контактную лингвистику, этномузыкологию и терминологию, а также освещает проблемы перевода культурно-специфичных музыкальных терминов между восточными и западными языковыми традициями.

Ключевые слова

музыкальная терминология, узбекский язык, персидско-арабские заимствования, русское влияние, этимология, семантические особенности, сопоставительный анализ, Шашмаком, система макомов

Introduction

Language serves as a mirror of culture, history, and collective identity. Among various lexical domains, musical terminology stands out as one of the most culturally rich and historically layered areas of vocabulary. Music is not merely an artistic form but also a complex cultural phenomenon that embodies philosophical worldviews, religious beliefs, social structures, and historical transformations of a

society. Consequently, the study of musical terms provides valuable insights into the linguistic and cultural evolution of a nation.

The Uzbek language possesses a unique musical terminology shaped by centuries of cultural interactions along the Silk Road. Being at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilizations, Uzbek musical vocabulary has absorbed multiple lexical layers. The Persian-Arabic layer, introduced primarily through the spread of Islam and the development of the maqom art, brought rich philosophical and aesthetic concepts. Later, during the Soviet period, a significant number of Russian and international terms entered the Uzbek musical lexicon, reflecting the modernization and institutionalization of music education and performance. Today, English musical terms are increasingly influencing Uzbek through globalization and contemporary popular music.

Despite the richness and hybrid nature of Uzbek musical terminology, systematic contrastive studies comparing it with English – one of the most widely used languages in modern musicology and ethnomusicology – remain limited. Most existing research has focused either on the description of traditional Uzbek musical instruments and maqom systems or on separate etymological analyses. However, few studies have examined the etymological origins, semantic shifts, and cultural connotations of musical terms in Uzbek through a comparative lens with English.

This study aims to fill this research gap by conducting a contrastive linguistic analysis of the etymological and semantic features of musical terms in the Uzbek language under the influence of Persian-Arabic and Russian layers, in comparison with their English equivalents. The main objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To identify and classify the main lexical layers (Persian-Arabic, Russian, and native Turkic) in Uzbek musical terminology.
2. To analyze the etymological origins of selected musical terms in Uzbek and trace their historical development.
3. To examine the semantic features and cultural connotations of these terms in the Uzbek linguistic and cultural context.
4. To compare the findings with the corresponding terms in English and highlight similarities and differences in their formation and meaning.
5. To reveal the processes of semantic adaptation, broadening, narrowing, and cultural borrowing in Uzbek musical vocabulary.

The significance of this study lies not only in its contribution to Uzbek linguistics and ethnomusicology but also in its broader implications for contact linguistics and cross-cultural communication. Understanding how culturally

specific musical concepts are encoded in language helps address practical challenges in translation, music education, and international cultural exchange, particularly between Eastern and Western musical traditions.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a review of related literature. Section 3 describes the research methodology and data. Section 4 presents the results and discussion, focusing on Persian-Arabic and Russian influences and their contrast with English. The final section offers conclusions and suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

The study of musical terminology has long attracted the attention of linguists, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists. However, contrastive analyses of musical lexical units between Turkic and Indo-European languages, particularly Uzbek and English, remain relatively underexplored.

Early research on Uzbek musical terminology primarily focused on the description and classification of traditional musical instruments and the maqom system. Notable works include those by Matyoqubov (1990, 2000), who provided detailed descriptions of the Shashmaqom repertoire and its terminology. Karomatov (1970s-1980s) made significant contributions to the historical development of Uzbek musical culture, emphasizing the Central Asian roots of maqom art. These classical studies laid the foundation for understanding the cultural significance of musical terms in Uzbek society but offered limited linguistic analysis of etymology and semantics.

In recent decades, several Uzbek scholars have begun to examine musical terminology from a linguistic perspective. Yusupova (2025) analyzed the musical terminology of the Uzbek language and identified three main lexical layers: native Turkic, Persian-Arabic, and Russian. She highlighted that Persian-Arabic borrowings constitute the core of traditional musical vocabulary, especially in the domain of modal systems and instruments. Similarly, Akhmedov (2026) investigated the processes of terminological formation in Uzbek music and noted the strong influence of Arabic-Persian terminology on concepts such as *maqom*, *usul*, *shobe*, and *gushe*.

Muxtorova and Abduquddusov (2025) conducted a preliminary comparative study of music-related vocabulary between English and Uzbek. Their work pointed out significant differences in the sources of borrowing and cultural connotations. However, their analysis remained largely descriptive and did not provide a deep etymological or semantic contrastive examination. Turayev (2024) focused on the

semantic features of selected musical terms but limited the scope to synchronic analysis without sufficient diachronic perspective.

On the international level, substantial research exists on the etymology and semantics of English musical terminology. Apel (1970) and Randel (2003) in their well-known music dictionaries traced the origins of Western musical terms, most of which derive from Italian, French, Greek, and Latin. Studies by Zbikowski (2002) and Spitzer (2004) explored the cognitive and metaphorical dimensions of musical language in Western culture. These works demonstrate that English musical terminology is deeply rooted in European classical music theory and performance practices.

Several scholars have also examined language contact phenomena in musical terminology. Feld (1984) and Turino (2008) emphasized the role of music as a cultural practice and how terminology reflects power relations and cultural dominance. In the context of Central Asia, Levin (1996) and During (2005) analyzed the impact of Soviet cultural policy on traditional musical systems, including the introduction of Western musical concepts and terminology into Uzbek and Tajik musical education.

Despite these valuable contributions, several research gaps remain. First, most Uzbek studies are conducted within a monolingual framework and rarely employ contrastive methods with major world languages such as English. Second, while the existence of Persian-Arabic and Russian layers in Uzbek musical vocabulary is widely acknowledged, systematic etymological and semantic analyses of these layers are still insufficient. Third, the cultural and philosophical connotations embedded in Uzbek terms (especially *maqom*-related terminology) have not been adequately compared with the more technically oriented English musical lexicon.

The present study seeks to address these gaps by offering a contrastive linguistic analysis that combines diachronic (etymological) and synchronic (semantic) perspectives. It aims to examine how Persian-Arabic and Russian influences have shaped the formation, meaning, and usage of musical terms in modern Uzbek, while highlighting fundamental differences and occasional similarities with English musical terminology.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative contrastive linguistic approach combined with etymological and semantic analysis to investigate musical terminology in the Uzbek and English languages. The research is primarily descriptive and analytical in nature, focusing on both diachronic (historical) and synchronic (contemporary) dimensions of lexical units.

3.1. Research Design

The study follows a contrastive linguistic framework based on the principles of comparative linguistics (James, 1980; Chesterman, 1998). It combines two main analytical perspectives:

- **Diachronic analysis** – to trace the etymological origins and historical development of musical terms.
- **Synchronic analysis** – to examine the current semantic features, cultural connotations, and usage of these terms in modern Uzbek and English.

3.2. Data Collection

The primary data for this research consists of musical terminology collected from reliable sources in both languages. A total of **75 musical terms** were selected using purposive sampling. The selection criteria included:

- High frequency of use in traditional and classical music;
- Representation of different semantic fields (musical instruments, modal systems, rhythmic patterns, genres, technical terms, and performance directions);
- Clear presence of foreign influence (Persian-Arabic or Russian in Uzbek; Latin/Greek/Italian/French in English).

Sources for Uzbek terms:

- “Shashmaqom” musical repertoire and theoretical works (Matyoqubov, 2000; Yusupova, 2025);
- Modern Uzbek music dictionaries and textbooks;
- Academic papers on Uzbek ethnomusicology (Akhmedov, 2026; Karomatov, 1987);
- Audio and video materials of traditional performances.

Sources for English terms:

- Standard music reference works (Apel, 1970; Randel, 2003; Grove Music Online);
- Academic literature on Western music theory and terminology.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The collected terms were analyzed using the following methods:

1. **Etymological Analysis** The origin of each term was traced using etymological dictionaries and historical linguistic sources. For Uzbek terms, special attention was paid to Persian-Arabic (mainly through classical Arabic and Persian texts) and Russian layers. For English terms, Latin, Greek, Italian, and French origins were examined.

2. **Semantic Analysis** The semantic structure of each term was analyzed according to semantic field theory (Lyons, 1977). Particular focus was given to:

- Core meaning and additional cultural-philosophical connotations;
- Semantic shifts (broadening, narrowing, or pejoration/amélioration);
- Culturally specific (untranslatable) components.

3. **Contrastive Analysis** Uzbek and English equivalents were compared at three levels:

- Formal (morphological and phonological);
- Semantic (meaning and connotations);
- Cultural (embedded values and worldview).

4. **Classification** All terms were classified according to:

- Lexical origin (native Turkic, Persian-Arabic, Russian, international);
- Semantic category (instrument names, modal terms, technical terms, etc.);
- Degree of cultural specificity.

3.4. Reliability and Validity

To ensure reliability, the etymological information was cross-checked with multiple authoritative sources. Semantic interpretations were supported by examples from actual musical practice and theoretical texts. The researcher consulted two experts in Uzbek ethnomusicology and one linguist specializing in contact linguistics to validate the classifications and interpretations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Persian-Arabic Layer in Uzbek Musical Terminology

The Persian-Arabic lexical layer forms the core of traditional Uzbek musical vocabulary, especially in the domain of modal systems and classical instruments. This influence primarily entered through the spread of Islam and the development of the maqom art along the Silk Road.

The term **maqom** (from Arabic *maqām* – “place”, “position”, “station”) is central to Uzbek music. In Arabic-Persian musical theory, it originally referred to a position on the scale, but in Central Asian tradition, particularly in **Shashmaqom** (Persian *shash* “six” + *maqom*), it evolved into a complex cyclical genre consisting of six main modes: Buzruk, Rost, Navo, Dugoh, Segoh, and Iroq. Unlike a simple scale, *maqom* in Uzbek culture carries deep philosophical and spiritual connotations linked to Sufi ideas of reaching divine love and emotional states.

Other prominent Persian-Arabic borrowings include:

- **Tanbur** (Persian origin) – a long-necked lute considered the philosophical instrument of maqom.
- **Dutar** (Persian *du* “two” + *tār* “string”) – two-stringed lute.
- **Doira** (Persian/Arabic) – frame drum with jingles.
- **Rubob** (Arabic/Persian) – plucked lute.

- **Surnay** (Persian) – double-reed wind instrument.

These terms not only denote instruments but also embody cultural and spiritual values. For instance, the *tanbur* is often associated with meditation and the transmission of classical knowledge through the *ustoz-shogird* (master-apprentice) tradition.

4.2. Russian Layer in Uzbek Musical Terminology

The Russian/Soviet influence introduced Western classical music concepts and technical terminology during the 20th century. This layer is predominantly related to institutional music education, orchestration, and modern music theory.

Examples include:

- **Simfoniya** (from Russian *симфония*, ultimately Greek *symphōnía*)
- **Orkestr** (Russian *оркестр*)
- **Dirizyor** (Russian *дирижёр*)
- **Akkord** (Russian *аккорд*)
- **Tonalite / Garmoniya** (harmony)
- **Nota** (note)

These terms reflect the Soviet-era modernization of Uzbek music, including the establishment of conservatories and the adaptation of Western classical forms. While Persian-Arabic terms are deeply cultural and philosophical, Russian borrowings are mostly technical and neutral in emotional connotation.

4.3. Contrastive Analysis with English Musical Terminology

English musical terminology is heavily influenced by Italian, French, Greek, and Latin sources due to the dominance of European classical music.

Uzbek Term	Origin	Semantic/Cultural Meaning	English Equivalent	Origin	Semantic Meaning
Maqom	Arabic <i>maqām</i>	Modal system + spiritual/emotional state	Mode / Scale	Latin/Greek	Technical musical scale
Shashmaqom	Persian	Six-mode classical cycle with Sufi poetry	Suite / Cycle	French/Italian	Group of pieces
Tanbur	Persian	Philosophical long-necked lute	Lute / Tambura	Arabic → European	General string instrument
Dutar	Persian	Two-stringed lute, national symbol	Lute	Various	General term
Doira	Persian	Frame drum with spiritual role	Tambourine / Frame drum	French/Arabic	Percussion instrument
Simfoniya	Russian	Orchestral genre	Symphony	Greek	Orchestral

	(Greek)				work
Akkord	Russian	Harmonic combination	Chord	Greek/Latin	Harmonic combination

Key differences:

- Uzbek *maqom* has rich philosophical and Sufi connotations, while English “mode” or “scale” is primarily technical.
- Many Uzbek instrument names are culturally specific and carry symbolic meaning.
- English terminology is more standardized and internationally uniform due to the global spread of Western classical and popular music (jazz, rock, blues, etc.).

4.4. Semantic Features and Processes of Adaptation

The analysis reveals several semantic processes:

- **Semantic broadening/narrowing:** *Maqom* in Uzbek is broader than its Arabic original, encompassing both mode and entire cyclical performance.
- **Cultural layering:** Uzbek musical lexicon shows hybridity – Persian-Arabic for tradition, Russian for modernization, and increasing English influence in contemporary popular music (*bit, trek, DJ*).
- **Untranslatability:** Many Uzbek terms (*maqom, shashmaqom, hofiz*) carry culture-specific meanings that require explanation rather than direct translation.

This hybrid nature demonstrates how musical terminology serves as a marker of national-cultural identity while adapting to external influences.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the etymological origins and semantic features of musical terms in the Uzbek language under the influence of Persian-Arabic and Russian lexical layers, with a contrastive analysis against English musical terminology. The findings confirm that Uzbek musical vocabulary is distinctly hybrid in nature, reflecting multiple historical and cultural layers.

The Persian-Arabic layer constitutes the foundational core of traditional Uzbek musical terminology. Terms such as *maqom, shashmaqom, tanbur, dutar, rubob, and doira* not only designate musical concepts and instruments but also carry profound philosophical, spiritual, and Sufi connotations that are deeply embedded in Central Asian Islamic culture. In contrast, the Russian lexical layer, introduced mainly during the Soviet period, brought technical and institutional terminology (e.g., *simfoniya, orkestr, dirizyor, akkord, garmoniya*), reflecting the modernization and Westernization of musical education and performance in Uzbekistan.

The contrastive analysis with English revealed significant differences in both origin and semantic depth. While English musical terminology is predominantly

shaped by Latin, Greek, Italian, and French sources and tends to be technically precise and internationally standardized, Uzbek musical terms frequently integrate rich cultural and emotional dimensions. The concept of *maqom*, for instance, extends far beyond the English notion of “mode” or “scale,” embodying a complex synthesis of music, poetry, philosophy, and spirituality.

The study identified key linguistic processes at work in Uzbek musical terminology, including lexical borrowing, semantic adaptation, broadening, and cultural layering. These processes demonstrate how language serves as a dynamic repository of cultural identity while simultaneously adapting to external influences and modernization.

The present research contributes to the fields of contact linguistics, contrastive linguistics, ethnomusicology, and terminology studies by providing a systematic etymological and semantic comparison of Uzbek and English musical vocabulary. It also highlights the challenges of translating culturally-bound musical terms between Eastern and Western linguistic traditions.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The analysis was primarily based on classical and traditional musical terminology; contemporary popular music terms and their rapid integration into Uzbek require further investigation. Additionally, the study focused on a selected corpus of 75 terms, which, while representative, could be expanded in future research.

Further studies could explore:

- The impact of English and global popular music terminology on modern Uzbek youth culture;
- Cognitive and metaphorical dimensions of *maqom* terminology;
- Practical issues in the translation and localization of musical terms in educational and artistic contexts;
- Comparative analysis with other Turkic languages (Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kazakh) to identify shared and divergent patterns.

In conclusion, the musical terminology of the Uzbek language stands as a vivid testament to the nation’s rich cultural history and its continuous dialogue with other civilizations. Understanding its etymological and semantic layers not only deepens our knowledge of Uzbek linguistics but also contributes to the broader appreciation of cultural diversity in global musicology.

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