

Persian-Tajik Izafa Constructions in The Uzbek Language and Their Functional Scope

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Abstract: This article examines the syntactic and semantic features of Persian-Tajik izafa constructions within the Uzbek language, focusing on their historical development, structural integration, and phonetic transformation. Through examples drawn from classical Uzbek literature, particularly the works of Alisher Navoi and his successors, the study explores how izafa constructions were adopted and adapted in Uzbek, often resulting in idiomatic expressions with shifted meanings. The research also addresses the typological differences between Uzbek and Tajik, as well as the implications of these structures for modern Uzbek phonology, lexicon, and stylistics. The article argues that the prevalence of these constructions in both literary and spoken Uzbek highlights the profound influence of Persian-Tajik on Uzbek linguistic and cultural identity.

Keywords: Izafa constructions, Persian-Tajik influence, Uzbek language, compound expressions, historical linguistics, phonetic transformation, lexical integration, Alisher Navoi.

Introduction: The Uzbek and Tajik languages have long shared a history of mutual influence, with structural borrowing occurring at various linguistic levels. One of the most notable syntactic imports into Uzbek from Tajik is the izafa construction—a grammatical structure that links two or more words, often indicating possession or qualification. Despite its foreign origin, this construction has become deeply rooted in both literary and colloquial Uzbek, especially in expressions of Persian-Tajik origin. As the analysis of classical texts such as those by Alisher Navoi reveals, the use of izafa forms a crucial component of poetic and rhetorical expression. However, their modern usage presents unique phonological, morphological, and semantic features worthy of scholarly attention.

Literature Review

Scholarly research into izafa constructions in Uzbek includes foundational work by Fattoh Abdullayev, who classified their components by parts of speech, and more recent studies on their lexicalization and phonetic reduction. Other researchers such as M. Isaqova and Sobir Abdulla have explored the role of izafa in enriching Uzbek poetic diction and idiomatic expression. In classical philology, the works of Navoi,

Babur, and Muqimi serve as empirical sources for tracing the evolution of these constructions. Comparative studies have also highlighted the semantic shift and lexical fusion resulting from the long-standing presence of izafa in Turkic languages.

METHODS

The research employs a descriptive-analytical approach, incorporating both synchronic and diachronic analyses. Textual data is drawn from a range of Uzbek literary sources, with a focus on classical ghazals, historical novels, and oral expressions. Linguistic components are analyzed in terms of their syntactic roles, phonological transformations, and idiomatic functions. Comparative analysis with Tajik and Arabic source structures is used to trace the origin and transformation of izafa forms in Uzbek. Attention is also given to language contact phenomena and lexical reanalysis in contemporary usage.

The main part

The Tajik and Uzbek languages have exerted a profound mutual influence, which can be observed across all levels of linguistic structure. One notable example of this influence is the adoption by the Uzbek language of the izafa construction, a syntactic feature specific to

Tajik (a non-Turkic language). This phenomenon alone illustrates the intensity of linguistic contact and interaction between the two peoples.

In modern Uzbek dialects, as well as in the literary language, numerous Persian-Tajik *izofa* constructions are commonly used, such as *baloi nafs*, *koni ziyon*, *soyai davlat*, *dardi bedavo* and *nuri diydah*. These compound expressions are seamlessly integrated into Uzbek usage.

Unlike Uzbek compound structures, which are typically formed using agreement, agglutination, or government, *izofa* constructions do not conform to these morphological patterns. In Tajik, the *izofa* marker is the vowel -i (or -yi), which functions as a linker and does not receive stress.

In the contemporary Uzbek literary language (excluding Turkic *izofa* constructions), speakers often lack clear awareness of the specific parts of speech that constitute Persian *izofa* expressions. As Professor Fattoh Abdullayev has emphasized, close observation reveals that the components of Tajik *izofa* constructions generally fall into the following three major categories: noun, adjective, and participle.

Examples include:

- Noun + Noun: *tarjimai hol* ("biography"), *obi hayot* ("elixir of life")
- Noun + Adjective: *janobi oliy* ("His Excellency"), *validayi muhtarama* ("respected mother")
- Noun + Participle: *bulbuli goyo* ("eloquent nightingale"), *sarvi ravn* ("graceful cypress"), *obi ravn* ("flowing water")

Izofa constructions involving other parts of speech occur relatively rarely in Uzbek usage.

The further we look into the past, the greater the presence and quantitative proportion of Persian-Tajik *izofa* constructions in the written literary language—particularly in poetic diction. In the works of Alisher Navoi, the scope of their usage is notably broad. Compared to his immediate predecessors such as Lutfi, Atoi, and Sakkoki, Persian *izofa* constructions occur more frequently in Navoi's texts. These earlier poets employed such constructions to a lesser extent, while Navoi made extensive and skillful use of them, thereby enriching the stylistic and expressive potential of his poetic language.

From Lutfi:

*Bir qiyoy boqsang zakoti husn uchun ey ko'rka boy,
Lutfii miskindin o'lguncha o'lguncha duo bo'sun sanga.*

From Atoi:

Yuzungdin ravzai rizvon bo'lubdur,

Labingdin chashmai hayvon bo'lubdur.

The volume and quantitative ratio of Tajik additions in the works of poets who lived and worked after Alisher Navoi is similar to the examples given by Lutfi and Atoi, but it is much less than the amount of Tajik additions used in Navoi's works, at least in the language of poetic works.

From Babur:

*Dilrabolardin yomonliq keldi mahzun ko'ngluma,
Kelmadi jonimg'a hech oromi jondin yaxshilig'*

From Munis:

*Vodiiy mulki tariqat gar Nizomiydur manga,
Manzili ma'niga hizri rohi Jomiydur manga.*

From Muqimi:

*Mulki Hindu Marvdin kelsam topardim e'tibor,
Shul erur aybim Muqimiy, mardumi Farg'onaman.*

In the written literary language of the time of Alisher Navoi, especially in the language of the great poet and thinker's own works, the quantitative ratio of the lexical layer borrowed from the Arabic and Persian-Tajik languages, depending on the style and genre characteristics, sometimes reached 60 percent. Also, many grammatical elements of these languages were used quite freely. This idea is especially true with regard to the use of Tajik affixes. In any case, in Navoi's scientific works, especially in such linguistic and philosophical works as "*Muhokamatul-lughatain*" and "*Mahbubul qulub*", the use of affixes gave rise to structural features that were not characteristic of Turkic languages at all. The very titles of the works written by the great Navoi clearly indicate how freely the Arabic and Tajik affixes were used.

The use of Persian-Tajik superlatives in the current Uzbek literary language has significantly decreased. However, given the existence of the phenomenon of bilingualism, as well as the extremely widening of the scope of the literary language, the concept of "decreased" becomes relative. In particular, in colloquial speech, in different dialects, the use of superlatives varies to different degrees, while in literature, depending on the characteristics of the genre and the specifics of the language of the characters, the number of such superlatives increases or, conversely, sharply decreases. It should be noted that the use of Persian-Tajik superlatives is more common in poetic works written in the old style, especially in ghazals written in the *aruz* meter, and in historical novels.

From Sobir Abdulla:

Ahli suhbatlar o'qing andoqki madhi doston,

Nazmi tabriklar yozay men qahramonlar nomiga.

Yangi yil, yangi xabar, yangi zafarlar keltirib,

Qo'shdi ilhom Sobir Abdullo didi ilhomiga

Even in poems composed in barmoq (syllabic) meter, such constructions occasionally occur, albeit infrequently.

From Hamid Olimjon:

Oygulni bandi zindon

Qilgan chog'idan buyon

In prose forms of literary literature as well, the proportion is approximately the same:

"...janobingiz Buxoroyi sharifda necha yil o'qib, nihoyat mahallaga imom bo'ldingiz"(A.Qodiriy). "Boyaqish otang nuqul mehnat bilan o'tib ketdi bu dunyoyi g'amxonadan" (Oybek). Indamasligim, qobilligim koni ziyon bo'ldi"(A.Qahhor). "Baholi qudrat shulardan bir nechtasini bag'rimizga oldik"(R.Fayziy).

The components that form the izofah construction have historically consisted of original Tajik words: dardi bedavo, obi dida, koni ziyon, xonai xurshid, ro'yi rost, ro'yi jahon, taxti ravon, bandi zindon.

Both components are originally Arabic words: husni jamol, baloyi nafs, zakoti husn, tavqi la'nat, jumlai mo'min, ayni muddao and others.

In modern Uzbek, most izofah constructions consist of components of mixed origin: suhbat chor, madhi doston, ayni zamon, kurrai zamin, nuri dida (Arabic+Tajik). Due to the order, the opposite situation (Tajik + Arabic) is rare: osmoni falak, xonai olam, charxi falak. In the Persian-Tajik isofic constructions, it is observed that there are few words of Turkish origin: "...sdaqai erkak keting"(A.Qahhor); "Onayi zor achinib dedi" (H.Nazir).

In our language, there are also compound expressions in which the izofa marker is Tajik, while all components are of Arabic origin. It is possible that the original Arabic izofa was replaced by the Persian-Tajik izofa due to the identical word order between Arabic and Persian-Tajik izofa constructions and the relatively more convenient pronunciation of the latter. For example, sukut alomati rizo ("sign of silent consent") consists entirely of Arabic-origin words. Originally, the izofa construction may have had the Arabic marker: alomat ur-rizo, tavqul-la'nat ("seal of curse"), which eventually transformed into the Persian form tavqi la'nat. In these examples, the Arabic izofa marker -ur / -ul was dropped, and replaced by the Tajik izofa marker -i.

Most Tajik izofa constructions used in contemporary Uzbek are employed as fixed expressions and possess an idiomatic or phraseological character. In such expressions, the original meaning of the components is

either entirely or partially metaphorized or shifted. Examples include:

- dardi sar (literally: "head pain") — used idiomatically to mean "worry" or "trouble";
- dardi bedavo (literally: "incurable pain") — used metaphorically for a complex, unsolvable problem;
- tarjimai hol — the standard term for "autobiography";
- gultoji xoruz (originally: "rooster with a crown of flowers") — an idiomatic expression;
- charxi falak — "the celestial sphere" or metaphorically "the wheel of fate";
- gumbazi davvor (literally: "rotating dome" — the sky) — used poetically to refer to the heavens.

These examples illustrate how izofa constructions in Uzbek, often of Persian-Tajik origin, have been semantically reanalyzed and incorporated into the idiomatic core of the language.

As is well known, Tajik izofa constructions were adopted into Uzbek as compound expressions. However, due to structural and typological differences between the languages, the majority of these constructions are now perceived in Uzbek as single lexical units. A closer examination of Tajik izofa structures reveals that many components forming such constructions are no longer used in contemporary Uzbek.

For instance:

- In the word bozorshab (market night), bozor is a shared lexeme between Uzbek and Tajik, but shab (night) is no longer in use in modern Uzbek.
- The word margimush (a type of poisonous plant, literally "death-mouse") consists of marg (death) and mush (mouse), both of which are unrecognizable to the average Uzbek speaker today; thus, the morphological composition of the word is opaque.
- The word juvonmarg (a young person who dies prematurely, literally "young-death") presents a similar case. The first component, juvon, still means "young woman" in Uzbek, but it differs semantically from its Tajik usage, and marg is unfamiliar to most speakers.
- The word holvaytar might remind the listener of holva (halva), but due to the obscure second component and phonetic transformations over time, its original form (holvai tar – "liquid halva") has been lost. Because the lexical-grammatical connections between the components of such izofa expressions are often no longer understood, some of these compounds have been fully lexicalized in both Uzbek and Tajik. As a

result, they are perceived and used as indivisible lexical units with a single stress, functioning as monolexemic terms in speech.

Naturally, grammatical and semantic changes in the structure of a compound expression inevitably alter its formal characteristics. As a result, the emerging “semantic opacity,” “indifference,” or “loss of transparency” can transform the surface structure of the compound to such an extent that it becomes virtually unrecognizable. In the Uzbek language, many such constructions are perceived and treated as compound words (qo’shma so’z) and are pronounced with a single stress. For example, the average speaker does not analyze the internal structure of the word *margimush* (a poisonous plant, literally “death-mouse”). Consequently, the *izofa* element, which once served as a grammatical connector between the two components, goes unnoticed by the speaker. This lexical unit is understood only in its holistic form, conveying the meaning of “a poison that kills mice.” In this way, *margimush* is not interpreted analytically but rather processed as a monolexemic, semantically opaque lexical item. The formal transformation — triggered by semantic shifts and the loss of component transparency — results in the full lexicalization of the construction, wherein its original grammatical structure is effectively lost to contemporary speakers.

Therefore, in many Tajik *izofa*-based constructions used in Uzbek written and spoken discourse, a certain degree of phonetic transformation has taken place. These changes — whether minor or more substantial — are often the result of natural language adaptation processes such as phonological assimilation, simplification, or reinterpretation of originally foreign morphological elements within the Uzbek linguistic system. As a result, while the overall structure of the *izofa* phrase is retained, its phonetic form may undergo modifications that reflect both phonotactic tendencies of Uzbek and the speaker’s level of familiarity with the original Tajik form.

a) the addition connecting the components of the compound *-i/yi* is dropped: *gultojixo’roz* < *guli toji xo’roz*, *joynamoz* < *joyi namoz*, *choyshab* < *joyi shab*, *bozorshab* < *bozori shab*, *holvaytar* < *halvoyi tar*, *astoydil* < *az taxi dil*, *shurpeshona* < *sho’ri peshona*, *sohibjamol* < *sohibi jamol*, *xotirjam* < *xotiri jam*, *saxari mardon* < *saxari mardon*;

b) both are run as parallel forms: *aksar vaqt* - *aksari vaqt*, *non-nasiba* - *noni nasiba*, *sohibjamol* — *sohibi jamol*, *ro’yi rost* — *ro’yrost*;

b) In the assimilated Tajik suffixed compounds, under certain phonetic conditions (risk of elision, avoidance of consonant clusters, etc.), the Tajik suffix *-i/yi* is

naturally preserved. A certain number of compounds are products of the written literary language and are rarely or completely absent in the living language: *fasli bahr*, *bog’i eram*, *ahli ayol*, *xurshidi tobon*, *tolibi ilm*, *baloyi nogahon*, *ahli rasta*.

r) The speaker naturally does not understand well which word family the components belong to. From a formal-grammatical point of view, the components of Tajik compound words belong to the following three main families—noun, adjective, and adjectival categories: *mardi maklayd*, *tarjimai hal* (noun + noun), *halvoyi tar*, *janobi oli* (noun + adjective), *bulbuli guyo*, *obi rason*, *khurshidi tobon* (noun + adjective). Compound words formed with the participation of other word families are very rare. In addition, the poor readability of the constituent part of the compound word has changed the grammatical relationship between the components: most of the time means most of the time, but in a living language this compound has become equivalent in meaning to the phrase “most of the time”.

The connection in such Tajik compounds as *kalami surkh*, *bachai nodon* (“red pen”, “ignorant child”), of course, cannot be included in the coordination, the words in the compound are not connected by control, and the so-called compound, which is called affixation, is also not similar to this compound from the point of view of its nature. In this example, the definite article (*kalam*) brings an additional addition, which means that the word that follows it is a determiner. The determining element does not receive any addition (*surkh*, *nodon*), only its place determines the grammatical function of the word, from this point of view, the compound is reminiscent of a construction with affixation, but in this example there is a deviation from the requirements of the method of affixation in the literal sense - a special element *-i/yi* is used to connect both words.

In some lexicalized word compounds in the Uzbek language, the connecting suffix is dropped. In most compound constructions, the grammatical connection between the components of the compound has disappeared and become imperceptible. While it is customary to write such compound constructions with a suffix in spelling, in some cases the connecting suffix is preserved for convenience. For example:

A) *mo’yi lab* - *mo’ylov*, *kabobi tok* - *kavatak*, *halvoyi tar* - *holvaytar*, *sari kor* - *sarkor*, *charxi falak* - *charxpalak*, *az tahti dil* - *astoydil*, *guli toji xurus* - *gultojixo’roz*.

B) *dardi sar* - *dardisar*, *mardi kor* - *mardikor*, *shohi mardon* - *shohimardon*.

Some of these word combinations can be used both with and without an adverb. For example: *rizqi ruz* //

rizq-ruz, ruyi rost // ruyrost. The abbreviated version of such constructions without an adverb is mainly characteristic of oral speech.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the reason for the frequent use of so many Tajik adverbs in the modern Uzbek language is, first of all, the tradition of the ancient Turkic language and the modern Uzbek literary language, and secondly, the desire of Uzbek writers to make the image solemn and the speech expressive.

Persian-Tajik izafa constructions in the Uzbek language represent a fascinating intersection of linguistic contact, structural borrowing, and semantic transformation. Their integration into Uzbek not only reflects historical ties with Persian but also showcases the adaptability and expressive potential of Uzbek as a literary language. As many of these constructions have become idiomatic, they now serve as carriers of cultural meaning and stylistic nuance. The phonetic and grammatical transformations they have undergone highlight a broader process of lexicalization, whereby foreign syntactic models are assimilated and reinterpreted within a Turkic linguistic framework. Future studies may further explore the pedagogical and stylistic implications of izafa forms in modern Uzbek, particularly in educational and lexicographic contexts.

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