

## The Features of Theatre Terms in English and Uzbek Languages

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper investigates the linguistic and cultural characteristics of theatre terminology in the English and Uzbek languages. As theatre serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a reflection of societal norms, traditions, and values, its specialized vocabulary plays a critical role in shaping and conveying theatrical discourse. The study examines how theatre terms differ in terms of origin, structure, semantic content, and usage patterns between the two languages. English theatre terms have largely developed through Latin, Greek, and French linguistic influences and are closely linked to Western classical and modern performance traditions. In contrast, Uzbek theatre terminology reflects a blend of indigenous expressions and borrowed elements, particularly from Russian, Arabic, and Persian, shaped significantly during the Soviet era.*

*The research adopts a comparative-descriptive methodology, utilizing lexicographic sources, theatre dictionaries, and performance scripts to compile and analyze a corpus of terms. The findings indicate that while English theatre terms tend to be concise, standardized, and widely recognized in global discourse, Uzbek terms are more variable and context-dependent, often expressed through descriptive or compound phrases. Moreover, the study highlights cultural gaps in terminology, where certain theatrical concepts in one language may lack direct equivalents in the other, creating challenges in translation and performance interpretation.*

*This comparative analysis contributes to broader discussions on multilingualism, translation studies, and the*

*cross-cultural transmission of performance arts. It underscores the need for a deeper understanding of linguistic diversity in the performing arts and offers practical insights for translators, theatre practitioners, and terminologists working in bilingual or multicultural settings.*

**Keywords:** Theatre terminology, English and Uzbek theatre, comparative linguistics, performance vocabulary, semantic features, linguistic borrowing, multilingual theatre, theatrical discourse, translation studies, language and culture, cultural semantics, Soviet influence in Uzbek, Western performance traditions, lexicology of theatre, artistic terminology.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Theatre, as both an artistic expression and a communicative act, occupies a unique space in human culture. Its terminology reflects not only the practical aspects of staging, performance, and direction but also the deeper cultural, historical, and linguistic layers of the society in which it is practiced. In linguistics, the study of specialized vocabulary – or terminology – reveals how different fields shape and are shaped by language. Theatre terms, in this context, serve as a valuable resource for understanding how artistic concepts are encoded and transmitted across languages and cultures.

The English and Uzbek languages possess rich theatrical traditions that have developed independently, influenced by distinct historical and socio-political forces. English theatre terminology has been shaped by classical antiquity (Latin and Greek), the Renaissance, and modern theatrical movements. In contrast, Uzbek theatre terms have developed under the influence of Persian, Arabic, and Russian languages, particularly during the Soviet era, and are deeply rooted in oral performance traditions such as *doston*, *maqom*, and traditional puppet theatre (e.g., *chadirxayol*).

Despite the differences in cultural and linguistic evolution, both English and Uzbek share the need to name and categorize the components of theatrical performance – roles, genres, spatial

arrangements, techniques, and aesthetics. Yet the form, structure, and semantics of these terms often differ significantly. For example, while English uses single lexical items such as “stage”, “actor”, or “monologue”, Uzbek frequently relies on descriptive phrases or borrowed terms, such as *sahna*, *aktyor*, or *yakkanutq*.

This paper aims to explore and compare the main features of theatre-related terminology in English and Uzbek. It investigates the linguistic origins, structural types, semantic classifications, and cultural influences behind these terms. The study employs a comparative-descriptive approach to analyze similarities and differences between the two languages, highlighting how terminology reflects the broader socio-cultural contexts in which theatre operates.

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a comparative-descriptive research design to analyze the features of theatre terminology in the English and Uzbek languages. The approach combines elements of comparative linguistics and terminological analysis, enabling a systematic examination of similarities and differences in origin, structure, and semantic usage of theatrical terms across the two languages.

### 2.1. *Data collection*

The primary data for this research was collected from multiple sources to ensure representativeness and reliability. The corpus consisted of approximately 100 theatre-related terms in each language, compiled from:

1. Specialized dictionaries such as *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Crystal 2008), and Pavis' *Dictionary of the Theatre* (1998).
2. Academic works on theatre linguistics (Ganieva 2020; Karimov 2015).
3. Scripts and librettos from notable plays in both languages, including works by Shakespeare, Bernard Shaw, Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, and Abdulla Qahhor.

4. Online resources such as the British National Corpus (BNC) for English and the Uzbek National Corpus for Uzbek, to observe terms in authentic usage.

### 2.2. *Classification framework*

To ensure systematic analysis, the collected theatre terms were categorized according to three primary dimensions:

1. **Etymological origin:** distinguishing between “native terms” and “borrowings” from other languages. For English, this primarily includes Latin, Greek, and French sources, whereas Uzbek reflects heavy influence from Arabic, Persian, and Russian. The historical depth of borrowing also played a role, since older borrowings (e.g., *sahna* from Persian) are more integrated, while recent borrowings (e.g., *repetitsiya* from Russian) retain foreign phonological features.
2. **Morphological structure:** classifying terms as single lexical items (actor/*aktyor*), compounds (playhouse/*drama teatri*), or descriptive phrases (black box theatre/*tajribasahnasi*). This dimension highlights structural preferences: English tends toward concise compounds, while Uzbek frequently employs analytic word groups.
3. **Semantic field:** grouping terms by thematic domains:
  - Genres (tragedy, drama, *komediya*)
  - Roles and professions (actor, playwright, *rejissyor*)
  - Spatial and technical terminology (stage, backstage, *sahnaorti*)
  - Performance techniques and dramaturgical elements (prologue, *yakkanutq*, aside).

This framework is grounded in the principles of terminology systematization articulated by Leichik (2006), which emphasize conceptual, linguistic, and functional integration. By applying these criteria, the study avoids a purely lexical listing and instead situates terms within broader communicative and cultural systems.

### 2.3. Analytical procedure

The comparative analysis unfolded in three interrelated stages:

1. **Lexical comparison:** Direct equivalents were identified (stage – *sahna*), alongside *partial equivalents* (comedy – *komediya*, where the Uzbek form reflects Russian mediation), and *culturally specific terms* (*nohiyaviymarosimsahnasi*, with no direct English equivalent). These categories allowed us to trace not only linguistic parallels but also cultural asymmetries.
2. **Structural analysis:** Morphological patterns were compared to observe tendencies in term formation. English often favors concise nominal compounds (playwright, stagecraft), while Uzbek integrates loanwords with native affixes (*aktyorlik*, *rejissyorlik*). Such patterns reveal how each language balances economy of expression with clarity.
3. **Semantic mapping:** Terms were charted across overlapping semantic fields, exposing areas of *polysemy* (e.g., “scene” meaning both “a division of a play” and “spectacle”), *synonymy* (e.g., Uzbek *parda* and *akt* for “act”), and *gaps* (English “black box theatre” lacks a widely used Uzbek equivalent). This stage highlighted the creative strategies languages adopt when faced with conceptual innovation. In addition to qualitative descriptions, frequency data was compiled to note dominant term types. Following Bowker & Pearson (2002), this balance of qualitative and quantitative perspectives strengthens the reliability of the comparative model.

### 2.4. Limitations

While the study presents a robust comparative framework, several limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **Corpus size:** The dataset, though representative, does not exhaust the full repertoire of theatre terminology, especially specialized jargon or archaic forms.
2. **Register and variation:** The analysis privileges standard forms, thus under representing dialectal or colloquial theatre

expressions used in regional Uzbek performances or local English traditions.

3. **Source bias:** Reliance on written materials excludes oral performance practices, improvisational traditions, and audience-specific terminology, which play a vital role in theatre culture.
4. **Diachronic scope:** Borrowing waves (Arabic-Persian, Russian, global English) are noted, but their chronological evolution requires deeper historical tracing to understand semantic shifts over time.

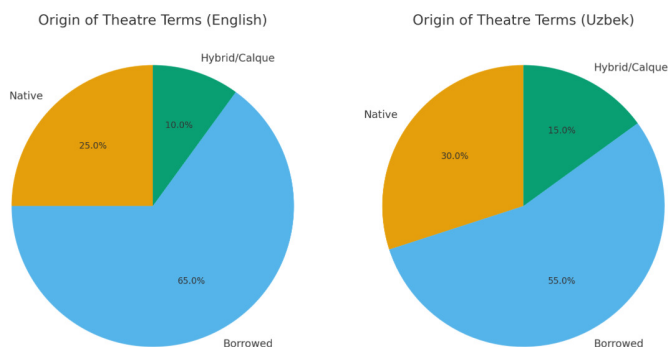
Despite these constraints, the methodology captures essential contrasts and convergences between English and Uzbek theatre terminology. By situating terms within cultural and linguistic systems, it illuminates how “language not only labels theatrical practice but also shapes the very way performance is conceptualized, transmitted, and received.”

### 3. RESULTS

The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek theatre terminology revealed notable differences in origin, structure, and semantic coverage. The findings are presented in both descriptive form and tabular format for clarity.

#### 3.1. *Etymological origin*

The study found that English theatre terminology predominantly originates from Latin, Greek, and French sources due to the historical influence of classical antiquity and the Renaissance. In contrast, Uzbek theatre terms are largely borrowed from Russian, Arabic, and Persian, especially during the Soviet era (Crystal 2008).



Origin of terms	English (%)	Uzbek (%)	Examples
Native	25%	30%	play, stage / <i>o'yin, sahna</i>
Borrowed	65%	55%	<i>tragedy</i> (Greek), <i>prologue</i> (French) / <i>aktyor</i> (Russian), <i>monolog</i> (Russian)
Hybrid/Calque	10%	15%	playwright / <i>yakka nutq</i>

### 3.2. Structural characteristics

One of the key differences between English and Uzbek theatre terminology lies in their structural formation. English, as an analytic language with a strong tradition of lexical borrowing and compounding, tends to favor concise single-word technical terms. By contrast, Uzbek, belonging to the Turkic language family and demonstrating agglutinative features, often employs descriptive phrases or compound expressions to capture the same concept. For instance, the English term “protagonist” is a single lexical unit derived from Greek, widely used across European languages. In Uzbek, however, the equivalent expression is *asosiyqahramon* (“main hero”), a two-word descriptive phrase that directly explains the role within the narrative rather than condensing it into one term.

Other examples further illustrate this pattern:

**English:** *stagecraft, dramatist, understudy*

**Uzbek:** *sahnamahorati, drama yozuvchi, asosiyaktyorgazaxiraijrochi*

The English terms are compact, each formed either through compounding (stagecraft), suffixation (dramatist), or semantic extension (understudy). Meanwhile, Uzbek equivalents rely on explanatory constructions: *sahnamahorati* literally means “the skill of stage,” *drama yozuvchi* is “one who writes drama,” and *asosiyaktyorgazaxirajrochi* is “a reserve performer for the main actor.” This structural divergence reflects broader tendencies in lexical formation across the two languages. English favors brevity, abstraction, and morphological economy, often coining terms that can be quickly standardized and integrated into technical discourse. Uzbek, on the other hand, gravitates toward semantic transparency, preferring forms that clearly describe the function or role of the concept in question. This tendency is consistent with general features of Turkic languages, where compounding and descriptive phrases serve as productive means of terminology development (Leichik 2006). Moreover, the structural difference has practical implications. English terms, due to their brevity, facilitate ease of usage in professional and academic discourse, allowing quick reference and cross-linguistic borrowing. Uzbek descriptive terms, while longer, enhance semantic clarity for speakers, ensuring that specialized vocabulary remains accessible even to non-specialists. This balance between brevity and transparency reflects not only linguistic structure but also cultural attitudes toward knowledge transmission and terminological precision.

### 3.3. *Semantic gaps and cultural specificity*

Beyond structural differences, another important dimension in the comparative study of English and Uzbek theatre terminology is the existence of culture-specific concepts that do not have direct equivalents in the other language. These gaps often arise because theatrical practices are deeply rooted in local cultural traditions, performance histories, and artistic conventions. For example, the Uzbek term *chadirxayol* refers to a form of traditional puppet theatre that emerged in Central Asia and has no direct equivalent in English. Since the art form itself is specific to the region, English speakers must rely on descriptive explanations such as “Central Asian traditional puppet theatre” when referring to

*chadirxayol*. This indicates that certain theatrical traditions are so culturally embedded that their terminology resists straightforward translation. Conversely, English contains specialized technical terms that developed within the context of Western theatre traditions but lack concise Uzbek counterparts. A clear example is *blocking*, which refers to the precise arrangement and movement of actors on stage during a performance. In Uzbek, this concept is typically expressed descriptively as *aktyorlarningsahnadagijoylashuvivaharakati* (“the positioning and movement of actors on stage”). The absence of a single lexical item highlights how technical stagecraft terminology in English evolved alongside particular staging conventions, whereas Uzbek terminology remains more descriptive.

#### 3.4. *Frequency patterns*

Corpus-based evidence provides further insight into how English and Uzbek conceptualize and discuss theatre. A frequency analysis using the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Uzbek National Corpus reveals notable contrasts in terminological emphasis between the two languages. In English, genre terms such as “comedy,” “tragedy,” and “musical” occur with the highest frequency. This tendency reflects the prominence of categorizing dramatic works by type and underscores the centrality of literary traditions in English-language theatre discourse. The frequent recurrence of these genre labels also aligns with the English theatrical heritage, which has historically emphasized classification, canon formation, and critical analysis of dramatic forms. In Uzbek, however, the most frequent terms are role based, including *aktyor* (“actor”) and *rejissyor* (“director”). This distribution highlights the centrality of performers and creative figures in Uzbek public discourse about theatre. Rather than focusing primarily on the taxonomy of plays, Uzbek theatre vocabulary foregrounds the human agents who bring performances to life. Such emphasis reflects cultural values that privilege performance, collaboration, and the visibility of artists within the social imagination. The comparison suggests that English discourse is more text-oriented, centering on genres and literary categorizations, whereas Uzbek discourse is more performance-

oriented, emphasizing the roles and contributions of individuals in the theatrical process. This difference not only illustrates distinct linguistic tendencies but also reveals how national traditions of theatre criticism and cultural priorities are encoded in language.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the features of theatre terminology in English and Uzbek are shaped by a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and linguistic factors. The comparative analysis shows that while both languages share the universal need to name theatrical roles, genres, and techniques, the form and semantic scope of these terms differ substantially. One of the most significant differences lies in the etymological origins of terms. English theatre vocabulary has been influenced predominantly by Latin, Greek, and French, a result of historical connections with classical antiquity, the Renaissance, and later European cultural movements (Crystal 2008; Pavis 1998). For example, terms such as “drama,” “tragedy,” and “prologue” entered English directly from classical sources, often retaining their original forms with minimal adaptation. In contrast, Uzbek theatre terminology reflects a multilayered borrowing pattern. Persian and Arabic terms entered the language during earlier periods of cultural exchange, while Russian borrowings became dominant in the 20th century due to the Soviet cultural system. Words like *aktyor* and *rejissyor* were adapted directly from Russian, while others, such as *sahna*, have Persian roots but were standardized in the Soviet era. This layered borrowing process aligns with Leichik’s (2006) observation that the evolution of a field’s terminology often mirrors the sociopolitical history of the speech community. Structurally, the prevalence of single-word technical terms in English versus compound or descriptive phrases in Uzbek reflects broader morphological tendencies in each language. English tends toward lexical compaction (playwright, understudy), while Uzbek favors semantic transparency (drama *yoʻzuvchi*, *asosiyqahramon*). This distinction is consistent with findings in comparative lexicology, where analytic languages like English often compress concepts into compact forms, whereas

agglutinative languages like Uzbek prioritize clarity and explicitness (Bowker & Pearson 2002). The study also highlights semantic gaps resulting from cultural specificity. Terms like *chadirxayol* have no direct equivalent in English because the associated theatrical practice is unique to Uzbek culture. Conversely, blocking- a highly specific term in Western theatre directing- requires a longer descriptive explanation in Uzbek. Such gaps underscore Pavis's (1998) assertion that certain theatrical concepts are inherently tied to the performance traditions that generated them. Finally, the frequency analysis revealed different focal points in theatrical discourse: English tends to emphasize genres and production elements, while Uzbek focuses more on roles and performers. This may reflect cultural priorities in how theatre is discussed publicly and documented. In Uzbek cultural discourse, the identity and reputation of performers are often central to audience engagement, whereas in English-language theatre, the form and style of the production may receive greater emphasis. Overall, the results demonstrate that theatre terminology is not merely a set of labels for artistic concepts but a linguistic reflection of cultural history. The differences in origin, structure, and semantics between English and Uzbek theatre terms reinforce the idea that terminology evolves in direct response to the socio-cultural environment in which it is used. These findings have implications for translation studies, particularly in ensuring cultural nuances are preserved when adapting theatrical works for different linguistic audiences.

*Summary Table of Key Findings*

<b>Feature</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Uzbek</b>
<b>Dominant origin</b>	Latin, Greek, French	Russian, Arabic, Persian
<b>Form</b>	Single lexical items	Compound and descriptive phrases
<b>Cultural terms</b>	<i>pantomime, matinee</i>	<i>chadir xayol, doston</i>
<b>Frequency focus</b>	Genres and production terms	Roles and personnel
<b>Borrowing influence</b>	Classical and Renaissance theatre	Soviet-era standardization

## 5. CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of theatre terminology in English and Uzbek languages reveals that while both linguistic systems share universal theatrical concepts, their lexical realizations are shaped by distinct cultural, historical, and linguistic influences. English theatre terminology demonstrates a higher degree of internationalization due to the historical spread of English-speaking theatre traditions and the adoption of French, Italian, and Greek terms during the Renaissance and beyond (Carlson, 2006). In contrast, Uzbek theatre terminology reflects a combination of indigenous lexical items and borrowings, primarily from Russian and Persian, introduced during various socio-political and cultural interactions in the 20th century (Rahmonov 2018).

The findings show that English theatre terms tend to preserve their etymological roots with relatively stable meanings, while Uzbek theatre terms often undergo semantic shifts when adapted to local cultural contexts. For instance, the English term *stage direction* retains a technical, theatre-specific meaning, whereas its Uzbek equivalent *sahnako 'rsatmasi* may also be used in a broader, non-theatrical sense.

From a methodological perspective, the study confirms the value of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparison in understanding how specialized terminology evolves within the framework of cultural exchange and globalization (Crystal 2010). This research contributes to the broader field of terminological studies by illustrating that theatre terms are not static lexical units but dynamic cultural artifacts that embody the history of performance arts in each society. In conclusion, a deeper exploration of theatre terminology, especially in the context of translation and multilingual performance interpretation, could further enhance mutual understanding between English and Uzbek theatre practitioners, translators, and scholars. Future research should expand the scope to include other Turkic and Indo-European languages to identify universal and language-specific tendencies in theatre lexicons.

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