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**GRAMMATICAL BORROWING: THEORETICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND  
EVIDENCE FROM THE UZBEK LANGUAGE**

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**Abstract.** This article examines the theoretical foundations of the concept of grammatical borrowing, its interpretations in world linguistics and Turkological studies, as well as its manifestations in the Uzbek language. The study explores the relationship of grammatical borrowing with such linguistic phenomena as interference, calquing, and grammaticalization, and reveals its linguistic nature and underlying mechanisms. The findings demonstrate that grammatical borrowing should not be understood as a mere transfer of grammatical forms; rather, it represents the replication of structural patterns and grammatical relations through language contact. Consequently, grammatical borrowing is interpreted as a complex contact-induced process that contributes to the restructuring and functional development of the recipient language.

**Keywords:** grammatical borrowing, language contact, interference, calquing, grammaticalization, grammatical model.

In contemporary linguistics, language development is viewed as a dynamic process arising from the interaction of internal and external factors. Historical-linguistic research demonstrates that the development of the world's languages has invariably taken place under conditions of direct or indirect contact with other languages. Consequently, cross-linguistic contact has facilitated not only the exchange of lexical units but also the transfer of grammatical models, syntactic constructions, and functional relations. From this perspective, language contact is recognized as one of the major sources of structural change within a linguistic system. Political, economic, cultural, and scholarly relations among peoples have further intensified interaction between their languages. As a result, languages have incorporated not only lexical units but also certain grammatical models and structural relations. In linguistics, such phenomena are generally described as processes of borrowing arising from language contact.

In traditional linguistics, borrowing was studied primarily at the lexical level, with particular attention being paid to the phonetic, semantic, and morphological adaptation of loanwords. However, since the second half of the twentieth century, research in contact linguistics, areal linguistics, and linguistic typology has demonstrated that grammar itself may also be subject to contact-induced influence. In particular, studies of multilingual settings and prolonged language contact have provided evidence that grammatical categories, syntactic models, and functional relations can also be transferred from one language to another. Consequently, grammatical borrowing has emerged as an important theoretical issue in contemporary linguistics.

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Grammatical borrowing is a complex linguistic phenomenon associated with the transfer of grammatical models, syntactic constructions, morphological patterns, or functional relations from one language to another as a result of language contact and their subsequent adaptation to the system of the recipient language [Thomason, 88]. Unlike lexical borrowing, this phenomenon often involves not the transfer of linguistic material itself, but rather the replication of ways of expressing grammatical relations, structural schemas, and syntactic patterns [Johanson, 28]. In this respect, grammatical borrowing should not be regarded merely as the transfer of grammatical forms; rather, it manifests itself as a process of structural replication. In particular, within his theory of PAT (Pattern Replication), L. Johanson emphasizes that language contact often results not in the borrowing of linguistic material itself, but in the replication of models and patterns used to express grammatical relations [Johanson]. Y. Matras, in turn, characterizes grammatical borrowing as a contact-induced phenomenon that develops through communicative practice and subsequently becomes stabilized within the linguistic system [Matras, 234].

The theoretical approaches discussed above, together with the analysis of linguistic data, indicate that the principal characteristic of grammatical borrowing lies in the structural and functional integration of the replicated model into the recipient-language system, where it begins to function as a means of expressing grammatical relations. Although such elements initially emerge in discourse as contact-induced phenomena, through recurrent use, functional stabilization, and processes of normalization, they may eventually become integral components of the linguistic system. From this perspective, grammatical borrowing is more appropriately understood not as the simple transfer of grammatical forms, but as the outcome of the restructuring and structural replication of grammatical relations, syntactic patterns, and functional models.

Thus, grammatical borrowing constitutes a multi-stage linguistic process that develops at the intersection of such phenomena as interference, calquing, and grammaticalization and results from the complex interaction between the internal principles of language development and external contact-induced factors. This approach makes it possible to interpret grammatical borrowing not merely as a consequence of language contact, but also as an important evolutionary mechanism that may expand the structural resources of the recipient language and contribute to its functional development.

U. Weinreich, one of the foundational scholars of language contact theory, explains contact-induced grammatical change in relation to the phenomenon of interference. According to Weinreich, sustained contact between two languages gives rise to mutual influence at the phonetic, lexical, and grammatical levels. In Weinreich's framework, however, grammatical borrowing is not treated as an independent category; rather, it is conceptualized as a component of the broader phenomenon of linguistic interference.

Subsequently, S. Thomason and T. Kaufman demonstrated that social factors play a decisive role in the emergence of grammatical borrowing. They argue that, regardless of which level of the linguistic system undergoes change, the primary determinant of borrowing is not structural similarity between languages, but rather the intensity and duration of contact between their speakers. From this perspective, grammatical borrowing should be regarded not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a sociolinguistic one.

Y. Matras associates grammatical borrowing with patterns of language use in communicative practice. In his view, a new grammatical model initially emerges in the linguistic practices of bilingual speakers and subsequently, through recurrent use, becomes integrated into the linguistic system. Grammatical borrowing, therefore, does not occur instantaneously; rather, it develops through a prolonged process of adaptation.

B. Heine and T. Kuteva, in turn, interpret grammatical borrowing in relation to processes of grammaticalization. According to these scholars, language contact may give rise to new grammatical meanings and functions. However, since grammaticalization may also result from

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language-internal development, it would be theoretically inappropriate to equate grammatical borrowing with grammaticalization.

In Turkic linguistics, the phenomenon of grammatical borrowing is studied in close connection with language contact, areal convergence, and long-term multilingualism. The historical development of the Turkic languages demonstrates that, at different periods, they maintained intensive contact with Iranian, Arabic, Slavic, Mongolic, and other languages. Such interactions resulted not only in the borrowing of lexical units but also in the transfer and replication of certain phonological features, morphological markers, syntactic constructions, and patterns of expressing grammatical relations. For this reason, the Turkic languages constitute particularly valuable empirical material for investigating the mechanisms of grammatical borrowing within the framework of contact linguistics. L. Johanson likewise emphasizes that, owing to their extensive and diverse history of interaction with other languages, the Turkic languages provide exceptionally rich material for the study of language contact [Johanson, 2002].

Of particular significance for the theoretical interpretation of contact-induced processes in the Turkic languages is Lars Johanson's Code-Copying Model. Within this framework, contact-induced change is understood not simply as the direct transfer of linguistic elements from one language to another, but rather as a process whereby a model from one language is copied and subsequently reorganized within the structural system of another. Johanson's approach provides a theoretical basis for distinguishing between the material and structural dimensions of contact-induced change. In subsequent contact-linguistic scholarship, this distinction has been widely discussed in terms of MAT (Matter Replication) and PAT (Pattern Replication). MAT involves the replication of linguistic matter, such as phonological or morphemic material, whereas PAT involves the replication of a structural model, grammatical pattern, or functional relationship without necessarily transferring the corresponding linguistic material. Johanson's model thus makes it possible to distinguish between form and function, as well as between different degrees and types of copying in situations of language contact [Johanson, 2002].

The PAT mechanism is particularly relevant to the analysis of grammatical borrowing in the Turkic languages. This is because contact-induced grammatical change frequently does not involve the direct adoption of a grammatical element from the model language. Instead, a structural relationship or grammatical pattern characteristic of the model language may be reproduced through the recipient language's own morphological and syntactic resources. In such cases, the linguistic material may remain formally Turkic, while its combinatory properties, semantic-functional distribution, or syntactic organization become increasingly similar to those of the contact language. Thus, this type of grammatical borrowing is characterized by the reproduction of an externally motivated structural pattern through language-internal resources. From this perspective, PAT makes it possible to interpret grammatical borrowing not merely as the transfer of grammatical forms but as a broader process of structural replication.

Historical contacts between Turkic and Iranian languages provide particularly important evidence for this theoretical perspective. G. Doerfer notes that although lexical borrowing represents one of the most visible outcomes of language contact, contact-induced influence may extend considerably deeper into the linguistic system, affecting phonological organization and syntactic structure as well. In some cases, such influence may manifest itself not only through the emergence of new elements but also through the loss, redistribution, or restructuring of pre-existing structural features [Doerfer, 1967; 2011]. This demonstrates that the grammatical consequences of language contact cannot be adequately explained solely in terms of the direct borrowing of individual forms.

Research associated with H. Boeschoten also demonstrates the importance of approaching contact phenomena in the Turkic languages from a broader typological perspective. Historically, Turkic languages developed across diverse linguistic and geographical environments; consequently, their grammatical structures reflect not only language-internal and typological tendencies but also various forms of areal and contact-induced influence. In bilingual and

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multilingual settings in particular, contact-induced changes may affect word order, attributive constructions, strategies of subordination, auxiliary constructions, and the functional distribution of grammatical categories. This is one of the reasons why language contact involving Turkic languages has become an important field of investigation within contemporary Turkic and contact linguistics.

The research of A. Róna-Tas further indicates that lexical evidence alone is insufficient for reconstructing the historical contacts of Turkic languages. Phonological, morphological, and structural features must also be examined comprehensively. In the investigation of early Turkic language contacts, distinguishing the chronological and historical layers of interaction with different language groups constitutes an important methodological task [Róna-Tas, 1970]. Such an approach demonstrates that grammatical borrowing cannot be adequately examined in isolation from the historical, sociolinguistic, and areal conditions under which language contact takes place.

An important characteristic of grammatical contact in the Turkic languages is that models originating in a contact language are frequently realized through adaptation to the internal structure of the recipient language. In other words, an external model is not necessarily transferred directly; instead, it may be reconstructed through the existing morphological and syntactic resources of the Turkic language concerned. Consequently, superficial formal similarity alone cannot always serve as sufficient evidence of contact-induced grammatical change. The function, distribution, syntactic position, and pre-contact status of a particular construction must also be examined comparatively. One of the methodological strengths of Johanson's approach lies precisely in its attempt to distinguish contact-induced structural change from coincidental typological similarity [Johanson, 2002].

Furthermore, in contacts between Turkic and Iranian languages, the mechanisms of material and structural replication may operate in combination rather than as entirely independent processes. A contact situation may involve the adoption of linguistic material alongside the replication of a grammatical function or structural pattern. Conversely, a grammatical category present in the model language may be reproduced entirely through the recipient language's own linguistic resources. Such cases demonstrate that matter replication and pattern replication should not necessarily be regarded as mutually exclusive mechanisms; under conditions of intensive and prolonged contact, they may interact and jointly contribute to the restructuring of the recipient language.

These theoretical observations suggest that grammatical contact in the Turkic languages frequently manifests itself through the reorganization of syntactic constructions, grammatical relations, and functional patterns. Under conditions of prolonged bilingualism in particular, a constructional pattern characteristic of a model language may gradually become conventionalized in the recipient language through recurrent use and may eventually function as a relatively stable component of its grammatical system. In this process, a contact-induced innovation that initially emerges at the level of discourse may subsequently pass through stages of structural adaptation, functional expansion, and normalization.

From this perspective, interpreting grammatical borrowing in Turkic linguistics merely as the introduction of foreign grammatical elements would be overly restrictive. Grammatical borrowing should instead be understood as a product of structural and functional interaction between a model language and a recipient language, whereby an externally motivated pattern may be reorganized through the recipient language's existing grammatical resources. This feature accounts for the predominantly structural character of many instances of grammatical borrowing observed in Turkic languages. Accordingly, the study of grammatical contact in Turkic languages should take into consideration not only the borrowing of linguistic matter but also the processes of structural replication, functional convergence, syntactic restructuring, and the subsequent integration of contact-induced patterns into the grammatical system.

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In the scholarly literature, grammatical borrowing is frequently discussed in relation to such phenomena as interference, calquing, structural replication, and grammaticalization. Although these processes may overlap within the same contact situation and may even occur sequentially, they should not be treated as synonymous. Their principal differences concern the stage at which contact-induced influence emerges, the mechanism through which it operates, and the degree to which the resulting innovation becomes stabilized and integrated into the recipient-language system [Weinreich, 1953; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Matras, 2009].

The concept of interference, systematically developed within language-contact theory by U. Weinreich, refers to deviations from the norms of either language that arise in the speech of bilingual or multilingual speakers as a consequence of sustained language contact [Weinreich, 1953]. Interference may occur at the phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic levels. One of its defining characteristics is that a contact-induced innovation does not necessarily become established within the linguistic system. Some innovations may remain restricted to individual speakers or particular social groups, whereas others may spread through recurrent use and gradually acquire a broader communicative distribution. For this reason, interference may be regarded as one of the possible initial stages of grammatical borrowing, but not every instance of interference necessarily develops into a stable grammatical borrowing.

The distinction between interference and grammatical borrowing becomes especially clear when the criteria of conventionalization, structural integration, and normalization are taken into account. If a contact-induced grammatical innovation remains restricted to isolated speech events, it may remain at the level of interference. If, however, a particular model is repeatedly reproduced in different communicative contexts, expands its functional domain, and becomes compatible with the grammatical resources of the recipient language, it may gradually develop into a more stable contact-induced pattern [Matras, 2009]. At a later stage, recurrent use in institutional domains such as the mass media, academic discourse, official communication, and administrative language may contribute to its conventionalization and eventual normalization. Accordingly, the sequence interference → recurrent use → structural-functional adaptation → conventionalization → normalization may be used as an analytical model for describing the gradual integration of contact-induced grammatical innovations, although it should not be regarded as a rigid

**Table 1.**

**Differential features of interference and grammatical borrowing**

| <b>Criterion</b>       | <b>Interference</b>              | <b>Grammatical Borrowing</b>                         |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Source                 | Language contact                 | Language contact                                     |
| Initial domain         | Often individual or group speech | May originate in discourse and later become systemic |
| Stability              | May be occasional or recurrent   | Relatively stable and conventionalized               |
| Distribution           | Initially limited                | Extends across a broader speech community            |
| Structural integration | Not obligatory                   | One of the principal criteria                        |
| Normalization          | Not required                     | May represent a later developmental stage            |
| Outcome                | Contact-induced innovation       | Structurally integrated grammatical pattern          |

Another phenomenon closely associated with grammatical borrowing is calquing. In calquing, linguistic material is not necessarily transferred directly from the model language. Instead, the semantic or structural organization of a foreign pattern is reproduced through the

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recipient language's own lexical and grammatical resources. In this respect, grammatical calquing is closely related to PAT, or Pattern Replication, since the structural organization of the model language is replicated without necessarily importing its linguistic matter [Johanson, 2002; Matras & Sakel, 2007].

For example, Uzbek constructions such as qaror qabul qilmoq "to make/adopt a decision", ta'sir ko'rsatmoq "to exert influence", nazorat o'rnatmoq "to establish control", muzokara olib bormoq "to conduct negotiations", and kuzatuv olib bormoq "to conduct observation" display structural and functional parallels with corresponding Russian analytical constructions such as "prinyat reshenie, okazyvat vliyanie, ustanovit kontrol, vesti peregovory, and vesti nablyudenie". However, structural similarity alone is insufficient to establish direct borrowing. Some analytical verbal constructions may also reflect internal developments within Uzbek, earlier Persian-Tajik influence, or the interaction of several historical contact sources. Therefore, the contact-induced character of a given construction should be established through a combination of historical attestation, pre-contact distribution, frequency, structural correspondence, and discourse-based evidence [Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Matras, 2009].

This methodological precaution is essential because the existence of structurally similar constructions in two languages does not automatically constitute evidence of borrowing. Typological parallelism, independent internal development, and universal tendencies of grammatical organization may also produce comparable structures. Consequently, claims of grammatical borrowing should be supported not only by formal similarity but also by documented historical and sociolinguistic contact [Thomason, 2001].

Throughout its historical development, Uzbek has maintained intensive contact with Arabic, Persian-Tajik, and, more recently, Russian. The nature of these contacts differed considerably. Arabic influence was transmitted primarily through religious, scholarly, and written cultural traditions; Persian-Tajik influence developed through long-term territorial bilingualism and literary interaction; Russian influence became particularly strong during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through political, administrative, educational, scientific, and mass-communication domains. For this reason, the consequences of contact in Uzbek cannot be adequately explained by lexical borrowing alone.

One of the most prominent historical manifestations of Persian-Tajik influence is the use of izafet constructions. The Persian model in which an attributive relation is expressed through an izafet linker became highly productive in the written literary tradition of Uzbek and other Central Asian Turkic languages. Expressions such as dardi bedavo 'incurable pain', husni jamol 'beauty of appearance', ahli ilm 'people of learning', ahli qalam 'people of letters', nuqtayi nazar 'point of view', tarjimayi hol 'biography', and oynayi jahon 'television; lit. mirror of the world' preserve traces of this Persian structural tradition. In present-day Uzbek, some of these combinations are no longer productive syntactic patterns but function as lexicalized or semi-fixed expressions. This demonstrates that a contact-induced construction may undergo different developmental trajectories, including structural borrowing, conventionalization, and subsequent lexicalization.

At the same time, not every historically inherited izafet expression should automatically be classified as an active instance of grammatical borrowing in contemporary Uzbek. A historically borrowed construction that has become lexicalized does not have the same grammatical status as a productive model capable of generating new combinations. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between diachronic borrowing and synchronic grammatical productivity when analysing such structures.

**Table 2.**

**Selected contact-induced models in Uzbek**

| Contact source | Uzbek example | Structural feature | Present-day interpretation |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------|

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|                         |                             |                                   |                                           |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Persian-Tajik           | <b>dardi bedavo</b>         | Izafet-based attributive model    | Largely fixed                             |
| Persian-Tajik           | <b>ahli ilm</b>             | Izafet-based nominal construction | Conventionalized                          |
| Persian-Tajik           | <b>ahli qalam</b>           | Izafet-based nominal construction | Fixed / terminological                    |
| Persian-Tajik           | <b>nuqtayi nazar</b>        | Izafet-based nominal structure    | Lexicalized                               |
| Persian-Tajik           | <b>tarjimayi hol</b>        | Izafet construction               | Lexicalized                               |
| Russian-contact context | <b>qaror qabul qilmoq</b>   | Noun + analytical verb            | Requires historical verification          |
| Russian-contact context | <b>ta'sir ko'rsatmoq</b>    | Noun + light/general verb         | Productive in formal discourse            |
| Russian-contact context | <b>nazorat o'rnatmoq</b>    | Analytical predicative model      | Frequent in institutional discourse       |
| Russian-contact context | <b>muzokara olib bormoq</b> | Noun + analytical verb            | Frequent in political discourse           |
| Russian-contact context | <b>kuzatuv olib bormoq</b>  | Noun + analytical verb            | Frequent in official/scientific discourse |

Grammatical borrowing should likewise be distinguished from grammaticalization. Grammaticalization generally refers to the process through which a lexical item or a relatively autonomous construction acquires a grammatical function, or through which an already grammatical element develops a more abstract grammatical function [Heine & Kuteva, 2002; 2005]. Such developments may occur entirely through language-internal mechanisms. Language contact, however, may accelerate an ongoing grammaticalization process, trigger the emergence of a new function, or extend the functional range of an existing construction.

This interaction has led to the notion of contact-induced grammaticalization, which occupies an important theoretical position at the intersection of grammatical borrowing and grammaticalization [Heine & Kuteva, 2005]. For example, a structural relation present in a model language may encourage an already existing form in the recipient language to develop a new grammatical function. In such cases, no foreign linguistic matter needs to be borrowed; rather, a local element acquires an additional function under external structural influence. Such developments demonstrate the potential interaction between PAT and grammaticalization. Nevertheless, the two processes should remain analytically distinct: contact constitutes the external stimulus, whereas grammaticalization describes a language-internal pathway of structural change.

Under conditions of globalization and digital communication, English influence on Uzbek has increased considerably. At present, this influence is most evident at the lexical and terminological levels, as illustrated by expressions such as onlayn xizmat 'online service', raqamli platforma 'digital platform', startup loyiha 'startup project', IT kompaniya 'IT company', biznes model 'business model', and internet marketing. However, such combinations should not automatically be classified as grammatical borrowings. Some represent lexical borrowing, hybrid constructions, or terminological compounds rather than structural grammatical replication.

A stronger case for grammatical borrowing can be made only where an English structural relationship is repeatedly reproduced in Uzbek. In mass-media discourse, advertising, online journalism, and social-media communication, there are emerging tendencies toward compact attributive structures and analytically organized nominal constructions that may reflect English influence. Yet it remains necessary to determine which of these represent occasional discourse

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innovations, which have become productive structural patterns, and which are undergoing broader normalization. Such distinctions require corpus-based, frequency-based, and diachronic analysis rather than isolated examples.

The evidence discussed above suggests that grammatical borrowing is best understood not as a single act of transfer but as a dynamic and potentially multi-stage process. A useful analytical continuum may be represented as follows:

language contact → contact-induced innovation → structural replication → communicative adaptation → discursive activation → institutional consolidation → conventionalization / normalization.

These stages should not be understood as obligatory or identical in every contact situation. Some innovations may disappear at the discourse level; others may remain restricted to a particular register; still others may spread across communicative domains and gradually become integrated into the recipient-language system. For this reason, grammatical borrowing should be analysed as a process involving both emergence and stabilization.

**Table 3.**

### Relationship between grammatical borrowing and related phenomena

| Phenomenon                | Core characteristic                                                      | Requires contact? | Requires systemic integration? | Relation to grammatical borrowing               |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Interference</b>       | Influence of one language on another in language use                     | Yes               | No                             | May constitute an initial contact-induced stage |
| <b>Calquing</b>           | Reproduction of a foreign model through local resources                  | Usually yes       | Not necessarily                | One of the mechanisms of pattern replication    |
| <b>PAT</b>                | Replication of a structural or functional pattern                        | Yes               | May develop gradually          | A major mechanism of grammatical borrowing      |
| <b>MAT</b>                | Replication of linguistic matter                                         | Yes               | Variable                       | Accounts for material borrowing                 |
| <b>Grammaticalization</b> | Development of grammatical function from lexical/constructional material | No                | Yes                            | May be externally stimulated by contact         |
| <b>Normalization</b>      | Stabilization of a variant across socially recognized domains            | No                | Yes                            | May represent a later stage of borrowing        |

**Conclusion.** The analysis demonstrates that grammatical borrowing should be conceptualized as a complex, multi-layered, and multi-stage structural-functional process arising from language contact. Its essence lies not merely in the mechanical transfer of grammatical forms from one language to another, but more fundamentally in the replication, restructuring,

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and adaptation of grammatical relations, constructional schemas, and functional patterns within the recipient-language system.

From this perspective, grammatical borrowing stands in a causal and developmental relationship with interference, in a mechanistic relationship with calquing and pattern replication, and, in certain contact situations, in a functional-evolutionary relationship with grammaticalization. The Uzbek data examined in this study suggest that pattern replication (PAT) has particularly strong explanatory value for analysing contact-induced grammatical change. More precisely, a considerable proportion of the examples analysed in the present corpus appear to involve the replication of structural or functional models through Uzbek linguistic resources rather than the direct borrowing of foreign grammatical matter.

Accordingly, the statement that grammatical borrowing in Uzbek is predominantly realized through PAT should be understood as a conclusion derived from the corpus analysed in the present study rather than as an absolute claim applicable to all contact phenomena in Uzbek. This formulation allows the analysis to remain empirically grounded while avoiding excessive generalization.

On this basis, grammatical borrowing in Uzbek may be investigated along the continuum contact → transfer/replication → communicative adaptation → discursive activation → institutional consolidation → normalization. Such an approach makes it possible to interpret grammatical borrowing not as the simple importation of ready-made grammatical forms, but as a dynamic process in which external sociolinguistic influence interacts with the internal structural resources of the recipient language. This perspective provides a more comprehensive theoretical framework for explaining the mechanisms, functional development, and degree of integration of contact-induced grammatical patterns in contemporary Uzbek.

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