

Semantic Transformation and Poetic Functions of Arabic Borrowings in Alisher Navoi's Works

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Abstract: This article analyzes the contextual and poetic functions of Arabic borrowings used in the works of Alisher Navoi. The study examines Arabic lexical units not only in their dictionary meanings, but also from the perspective of semantic transformation, metaphorical expansion, and aesthetic load emerging within the literary text. Several Arabic borrowings are selected and their contextual usage as well as their poetic functions (metaphorical, symbolic, emotional, and philosophical) in Navoi's texts are revealed. The results of the research demonstrate that Arabic borrowings function as complex artistic and semantic units within Navoi's poetic system.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, Arabic borrowings, contextual analysis, poetic function, semantic transformation, literary language, classical literature, lexical-semantic analysis, metaphor, Sufi poetics.

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Introduction

The work of Alisher Navoiy holds an unparalleled place in the development of the Uzbek literary language and artistic thinking. The lexical layer used in his works, particularly Arabic borrowings, appears not only as a means of enriching the language but also as a complex poetic, semantic, and stylistic system [1]. In Navoiy's texts, Arabic elements function not as ordinary lexical units, but as context-dependent linguistic units carrying deep artistic, aesthetic, and philosophical meanings. From this perspective, analyzing the functional potential of Arabic borrowings in Navoiy's works—especially their contextual and poetic roles—remains one of the pressing issues in modern Navoi studies and historical lexicology [2-3].

Literature Review

Due to the richness and complexity of the language of Navoiy's works, special dictionaries have been compiled to fully understand them. These dictionaries serve to interpret the ancient Turkic, Arabic, and Persian words used by Navoiy, clarify their meanings, and explain their functions within the text. Therefore, dictionaries dedicated to Navoiy's works are among the most important sources of Uzbek lexicography [4].

One of the earliest dictionaries devoted to Navoiy's works is "Badoyi' ul-lug'at", compiled by Tole Imoniy Hiraviy around the late 15th to early 16th century, in which difficult words found in Navoiy's texts were explained. Later, the "Abushqa" dictionary was created, which also served as an important source for understanding the language of Navoiy and other representatives of Chagatai literature. In the 18th century, Mirzo Mehdixon compiled the "Sangloh" dictionary, which explains Turkic words found in the works of Navoiy, Lutfiy, Husayn Boyqaro, and Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur in Persian. A significant feature of "Sangloh" is that it not only provides definitions but also includes the poetic lines in which the words are used [5-6].

In the 20th century, the scientific study of Navoiy's works intensified. In particular, "The Dictionary of Navoiy's Works" and the four-volume "Explanatory Dictionary of Alisher Navoiy's Works" were compiled by large scholarly teams. These dictionaries were prepared under the editorship of Emin Fozilov with contributions from numerous linguists and literary scholars. They systematically explain the literal, figurative, terminological, and religious meanings of words and expressions found in Navoiy's works [7-8].

Today, dictionaries created for Navoiy's works serve as important scholarly resources not only for philologists but also for students, researchers, and admirers of classical literature. They play a crucial role in studying the richness of Navoiy's language, the capabilities of the old Uzbek language, and the characteristics of Arabic and Persian elements within it [9].

"It should be emphasized that a number of linguists such as G. Abdurahmonov, A. Rustamov, A. Hojiyev, Sh. Shukurov, N. Mahmudov, M. Rahmatullayeva, X. Doniyorov, B. Bafoyev, I. Nosirov, Z. Hamidov, and N. Husanov have studied the linguistic features of Navoiy's works from various perspectives, revealing lexical, speech, linguistic, and even artistic characteristics of words as fully as possible. These works have, to a certain extent, contributed to the compilation of explanatory dictionaries of the poet's language. Indeed, linguistics and lexicography are interdependent fields of study," notes Sayfiddin Rafiddinov, senior researcher at the Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan [10-11].

Research Methodology

This article analyzes the contextual and poetic features of Arabic borrowings used in the works of Alisher Navoiy. In the study, Arabic lexical units are examined not only in their dictionary meanings but also from the perspective of semantic transformation, metaphorical expansion, and aesthetic load that emerge within the literary text. Several Arabic borrowings are selected and analyzed in terms of their contextual usage in Navoiy's texts as well as their poetic functions (metaphorical, symbolic, emotional, and philosophical) [12].

Analysis and Results

Fiction, as a field that reflects life in its most complete and diverse aspects, comprehensively reveals the linguistic features of its time. For this reason, the functional potential of lexical units is more vividly manifested in literary texts. Literature provides a broad picture of the state of language as a form that preserves lexical units, their systems and structures, their history, and their linguistic functionality. Therefore, literary texts were chosen as the main lexical material to determine the status and characteristics of Arabic borrowings in the Uzbek language. The invaluable and unique works of representatives of classical Uzbek literature serve as clear evidence of this idea [13].

In his works, Alisher Navoiy selected various aspects of life as central themes, and through them, he artistically depicted the social realities of his time with great mastery. Navoiy skillfully employed Turkic, Persian, and Arabic words in the use of artistic expressive means. This enhances the aesthetic value of his works and encourages the reader to engage more deeply with the content. In particular, through Arabic and Persian borrowings, along with figurative devices such as simile, metaphor, and contrast, the author achieved

a more powerful and expressive articulation of his ideas [14].

Thus, the study of the linguistic features of Navoiy's works is significant not only from a literary-aesthetic perspective but also from lexical, semantic, and stylistic viewpoints. Through the system of words used by Navoiy, it becomes possible to understand his worldview, aesthetic principles, and the spirit of his era.

In this article, the contextual and poetic characteristics of Arabic borrowings in Navoiy's works are analyzed based on several selected lexical units. The aim is to identify their dictionary meanings, demonstrate their contextual transformations within Navoiy's texts, analyze their poetic functions (metaphorical, symbolic, emotional, and philosophical), reveal their semantic expansion in literary discourse, and determine their role within the overall poetic system [15].

The lexeme Qudsiy (Arabic: "sacred," "pure," "belonging to the divine realm") denotes purity and sanctity: qudsiy osor — "sacred traces," qudsiy ruh — "pure/divine soul." It is semantically associated with religious concepts such as spirit, light, and the celestial realm (arsh).

Balki qudsi ruhining go'yo qushi, Arsh bog'idin kelib ko'nglum tushi.

In this couplet, the phrase "qudsi ruh" expresses the divine origin of the human soul. The soul is depicted metaphorically as a "bird," and its descent from the celestial realm (arsh) is presented as an artistic image. In Navoiy's text, the lexeme qudsiy performs several poetic functions:

Metaphysical function: elevates the soul beyond the material world

Symbolic function: expresses divine connection through the imagery of arsh and bird

Sufi function: presents the human heart as a center receiving divine light

Aesthetic function: creates a sublime poetic atmosphere through cosmic imagery

Thus, qudsiy moves beyond its basic meaning of "pure" and becomes a metaphysical category representing the soul's connection to a divine source. It functions not merely as a religious term, but as a poetic-metaphorical unit expressing the cosmic and divine nature of the human spirit.

The lexeme Mehrob (Arabic: niche, the arched space in a mosque where the imam prays; figuratively, a curved eyebrow) is used in the following couplet:

Egma qoshingkim, o'zi roki' o'zi mehrob erur.

Here, the eyebrow is compared to a mehrob. Its curved shape symbolizes sacred architecture, elevating human beauty to a holy status. The lexeme performs these poetic functions:

Sacralization: presents the human face as a sacred space

Metaphorical transfer: transfers architectural imagery onto human anatomy

Aesthetic function: transforms visual beauty into a poetic image

Sufi function: connects human beauty with divine manifestation

Thus, mehrob evolves from an architectural term into an aesthetic-metaphorical category that sacralizes human beauty.

The lexeme Milk (Arabic: ownership, possession) originally belongs to a legal and social semantic field.

Qo'lig'a olib nayza o'rnig'a kill,

So'z iqlimini sarbasar qildi milk.

In this couplet, milk shifts from material ownership to creative dominion over the "realm of words." The poet expresses intellectual mastery through the pen rather than the spear. Its functions include:

Metaphorical function: transfers ownership to the domain of language

Intellectual function: reflects the creator's authority over words

Philosophical function: shifts from material to spiritual ownership

Antithetical function: contrasts spear (war) and pen (creation)

Thus, milk becomes a metaphor for creative power and intellectual sovereignty.

The lexeme *Mehnat* (Arabic: hardship, suffering) expresses physical and spiritual struggle.

Ey Navoiy, ul quyoshning mujdai vaslin berib,

Qilsa netkay, shomi hijron mehnatin ko'toh subh.

Here, *mehnat* represents the suffering of separation (*hijron*). Through the opposition of night (*shom*) and dawn (*subh*), emotional pain is linked to temporal experience. Its functions are:

Emotional function: intensifies the pain of separation

Sufi function: interprets life as a space of trials

Temporal function: expresses suffering through time contrast

Philosophical function: presents life as a system of trials

Thus, *mehnat* transcends simple hardship and becomes an existential and spiritual test contributing to human perfection.

The lexeme *Mizrob* (Arabic: plectrum used for plucking musical instruments) also signifies rhythm and musical action.

Soqiy, qadahe tutqilu, ey turfa 'anniy, Bazm ahlini qil bir necha mizrob ila multaz.

In this couplet, *mizrob* animates the festive atmosphere. It introduces rhythm, sound, and emotional energy into the scene. Its poetic roles include:

Acoustic function: creates sound and rhythm

Aesthetic function: enlivens the poetic setting

Emotional function: enhances mood and feeling

Dynamic function: introduces movement into the text

Thus, *mizrob* evolves from a musical tool into a symbol of artistic energy and aesthetic dynamism.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

In the works of Alisher Navoiy, Arabic borrowings are not mere lexical units but complex artistic elements with rich textual and poetic properties. Based on the analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Qudsiy expresses the divine origin of the soul

Mehrob sacralizes human beauty

Milk represents creative authority and ownership of the word

Mehnat conveys separation and spiritual trial

Mizrob symbolizes rhythmic energy and aesthetic vitality

Overall, Arabic borrowings in Navoiy's poetics undergo semantic expansion and form a multilayered artistic system that performs Sufi, aesthetic, psychological, and philosophical functions.

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