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THE SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT OF ARABIC WORDS USED IN THE “BABURNAMA”

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Abstract

This article investigates the semantic development of Arabic loanwords in classical Uzbek on the basis of lexical material attested in the *Baburnama*. The study proceeds from the premise that borrowed lexemes undergo various degrees of semantic transformation in the recipient language, ranging from full preservation of meaning to semantic expansion, narrowing, or complete shift. Drawing on explanatory dictionaries and contextual analysis, the research identifies patterns of semantic stability and change among Arabic-derived vocabulary in Uzbek. Special attention is given to semantically equivalent loanwords that retain their original meanings across Arabic and Uzbek. The findings demonstrate that many Arabic borrowings have become fully integrated into the Uzbek lexical system and now function as internal resources of the language. The study contributes to ongoing research on lexical-semantic change and the historical dynamics of borrowing in Uzbek.

Keywords: Arabic loanwords; semantic development; semantic expansion; semantic narrowing; semantic shift; Uzbek lexicon; Baburnama; lexical borrowing; semantic equivalence.

Introduction

The interaction between donor and recipient languages inevitably leads to semantic restructuring of borrowed vocabulary. In Uzbek, Arabic loanwords constitute a historically significant and functionally active layer of the lexicon.

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Over centuries of contact, many of these items have undergone phonetic, grammatical, and semantic adaptation. While some lexemes have preserved their original meanings, others have experienced expansion, narrowing, or semantic shift.

Classical Uzbek literary monuments provide valuable material for tracing these processes diachronically. Among them, the *Baburnama* occupies a special place as a rich linguistic source reflecting the lexical composition of its time. The present study focuses on Arabic loanwords used in this work, with particular emphasis on cases where semantic equivalence between Arabic and Uzbek has been preserved.

Literature Review

Scholarly interest in Arabic and Persian-Tajik borrowings in Uzbek has a long tradition, yet systematic investigation of their semantic evolution remains relatively recent. Early observations by **Fotih Abdullayev** (1949) touched upon semantic expansion in Arabic borrowings but did not provide a comprehensive framework for analysis. Later, the work of **I. L. Rahmonov** (1994) significantly advanced the field by proposing key mechanisms of semantic change in Arabic loanwords in modern Uzbek.

Research by **E. Begmatov** further emphasized the functional assimilation of Arabic and Persian-Tajik elements, arguing that synchronically many such items operate as internal lexical resources of Uzbek. Nevertheless, most previous studies have either examined borrowing in general historical terms or focused on individual authors' language. A focused semantic analysis of Arabic lexemes in the *Baburnama* therefore remains a relevant scholarly task.

Method and Methodology

The study employs a qualitative lexical-semantic analysis based on textual material from the *Baburnama* and data from Uzbek explanatory dictionaries. The research methodology includes: identification of Arabic-origin lexemes in the

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text; comparison of their meanings in Arabic and Uzbek; contextual analysis of usage in the *Baburnama*; classification of semantic outcomes according to established types of change.

Following Rahmonov's framework, semantic development is analyzed through four principal mechanisms:

- semantic expansion;
- semantic narrowing;
- semantic shift (transfer of meaning);

acquisition of an entirely new meaning (semantic reorientation or opposition).

Particular attention is paid to loanwords demonstrating semantic equivalence across the two languages.

The Main Part

It is well known that the semantics of a borrowed word may be fully, partially, or even completely transformed depending on the lexical composition and the level of development of the recipient language. As in other languages, some Arabic loanwords in the Uzbek lexicon have preserved their original meanings, whereas others have experienced semantic expansion, semantic narrowing (more rarely), or have shifted to express entirely different meanings.

Observation of classical Uzbek literary sources shows that the scope of borrowing and usage of words adopted from Persian-Tajik and Arabic gradually expanded in accordance with historical periods. When loanwords enter a recipient language, they typically remain, for a certain time, less universally comprehensible than native lexical items and tend to display lower functional activity. Addressing the issue of loanwords, Professor **E.Begmatov** notes that although Arabic and Persian-Tajik elements serving as the basis for Uzbek lexical formation are genetically foreign, from the standpoint of the contemporary Uzbek literary language (i.e., synchronically), classifying them strictly as external resources is only conditionally correct. These words have been assimilated into Uzbek, have

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long been in active use, and have become a legitimate component of the language's lexical wealth. Consequently, for present-day Uzbek speakers, many such items are no longer perceived as borrowings. Owing to this feature, Arabic and Persian-Tajik lexical bases that serve in the formation of new Uzbek words functionally approximate traditional native Turkic vocabulary. Therefore, the majority of such borrowed elements may be regarded, in functional terms, as internal resources of the Uzbek language.

At present, the frequency and scope of Arabic-derived words in Uzbek have expanded to such an extent that explanatory dictionaries of Uzbek record their meanings alongside those of native lexical items, often demonstrating considerable semantic development. Importantly, for language users, the meanings of many Arabic loanwords are understood as naturally as those of native vocabulary; in many cases, they are no longer distinguished from Common Turkic words. This fact further distances these items from their original status as "foreign" elements.

Historically, the destinies of words borrowed from Arabic have varied. There exist items whose semantic evolution in modern Uzbek is particularly illustrative. Many words that have undergone popular reinterpretation and have become deeply embedded in colloquial speech have broadened or otherwise modified their meanings. From a semantic standpoint, every lexical unit exists in a state of dialectical movement. Over time, meanings change: some words undergo semantic narrowing, others shift in meaning, and still others lose their original semantic content altogether.

The expansion and transformation of the semantic structure of loanwords is a phenomenon directly related to the development of the system of meaning. In general, semantic changes in borrowed vocabulary constitute one of the areas that has only relatively recently begun to receive systematic attention in linguistic scholarship. Although many linguists have attempted to address this domain in their research, most studies have focused either on the general influx of loanwords

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at particular stages of language development or on their features within the works of individual thinkers. Therefore, the comprehensive study of Arabic borrowings in modern Uzbek remains one of the important tasks facing contemporary linguistics. The present research is intended as a modest contribution toward fulfilling this objective.

When Arabic words are assimilated into Uzbek, they undergo not only semantic adaptation but also certain phonetic and grammatical modifications. The present study examines the changes observed in Arabic lexemes used in the *Baburnama*. Just as the pathways of Arabic lexical borrowing into Uzbek have been diverse, the semantic transformations of these items have also been varied. Among these processes, semantic expansion constitutes one of the primary phenomena.

Although the prominent linguist **Fotih Abdullayev**, in his 1949 article “*O‘zbek tilida o‘zlashgan arabizm*”, briefly addressed the issue of semantic expansion in loanwords, this phenomenon has not yet become the object of fully comprehensive investigation. Nevertheless, notable contributions have been made in this direction. In particular, the work of **I. L. Rahmonov**, published in 1994 under the title “*Hozirgi o‘zbek tilidagi arabcha o‘zlashgan so‘zlarning semantik tuzilishidagi o‘zgarishlar*”, significantly advanced the study of this field. According to this line of research, changes in the semantic structure of words may arise through several principal mechanisms:

- Semantic expansion;
- Semantic narrowing;
- Semantic shift (transfer of meaning);

Acquisition of an entirely new meaning, including semantic reorientation and opposition.

One of the central components of the present study is the analysis of semantic changes in Arabic loanwords attested in the *Baburnama*. Examination of borrowed vocabulary in Uzbek shows that, as a result of lexical-semantic

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development, two major tendencies are typically observed: the expansion or the narrowing of lexical meaning.

It should also be noted that many Arabic borrowings recorded in explanatory dictionaries preserve identical meanings in both Arabic and Uzbek. Whether monosemous or polysemous, a considerable number of such loanwords display semantic equivalence across the two languages. Borrowings of this type occupy a significant place in the *Baburnama*, and their semantic behavior will be analyzed in the following sections.

Semantically Equivalent Loanwords

Meaning in Uzbek	Meaning in Arabic
AYB [a. – defect] 1 An act or behavior that violates rules or moral standards; sin. “Mushkning aybi budurkim, xushklug’i bordur, muni “mushku tar” desa bo’lur” (357).	Ayb
ASBOB [a. – reasons] In general, things used in activities and serving the purpose of activities: weapons, household items, etc. “Jami cherik eliga farmon bo’ldikim, to’ra va shotu va navkari to’ranikim, qal’agirlik asbob udur, tayyor qilg’aylar” (405).	Asbob
BALO [a. – trial; disaster, calamity, misfortune] A disaster, calamity caused by an event or action; worry. “Bovujud ajab bal oedurkim, hamisha el meni g’iybat qilurlarkim, boyiridin va Andijoniydin o’zgani rioyat qilmas” (204).	Balo
DAVO [a. – medicine; remedy] 1 A remedy used to cure a patient; a treatment; something that is generally healing. “Dehliga keltirib, Dehlidin kemag’a solib keltursinlarkim, Hakimi hoziqlar ko’rub, dardig’a davo qilsunlar” (459).	Davo
DALIL [a.– sign, trace; proof; reason] Something that confirms or testifies to an idea, opinion, etc.; proof, fact. “Qaysi ish valoyatqa mundin yaxshiroq dalil durkim, alarg’a qasd qilg’onlardin oz fursatg’a osor va alomat qolmadi” (112).	Dalil
JANOB [a. – side, side; respected person] (often in the form of <i>janoblar</i> (<i>sir</i>), <i>janobingiz</i> (<i>yours truly</i>)) 1 A form of honorifics used to honor people, officials, or statesmen, both past and present.	Janob

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<p>2 An adverb added to a person's name. “Bular ham zo’r bila olmaslar Xojalarning janobi andin oliy edikim, zo’r qila olg’aylar edi” (95).</p>	
<p>IBODAT [a. - to serve; to worship, to worship] <i>religion</i>. Worship, worship, adoration, and its practice; prayer. “Parhezkor hindular bu suvdin o’tmay, kemaga kirib, Gang bila bu suvning to’g’risidin o’ttilar. Mutaqadlari andoqdurkim, bu suv kishiga tegsa, ibodatini zoye qilur” (436).</p>	Ibodot
<p>INSON [a.– human] 1 Mankind, human being. 2 Every individual; person. 3 A form of address to someone (usually with a negative attitude). “Va alhaq suhbatta bebadal erdi va insoni komilkim derlar, o’shal erdi” (458).</p>	Inson
<p>FIKR [a. – thought, idea; mind, thought, imagination, reflection] A thought, imagination about something, an event, or someone. “Mening bila qolg’on bek va begot va yigit-yalang mening tirilmagimdin ma’yus bo’lib, har kim o’z fikrida bo’ldilar” (111).</p>	Fikr
<p>XABAR [a. – information; information; voice; section] 1 Information, report, notification about a person, thing or event. 2 News. 3 Information, information received through the daily press, radio and television; article. “Yaxshi bordi, o’z el va ulusidin ayrilib, bu xabarni yetkurdi” (121).</p>	Xabar
<p>ZAFAR [a. – victory, success] Achievement, victory, success. “Burunroq niyat qilib edikim, Rano Sango kofirg’a zafar topsam, tamg’ani musulmonlarg’a bag’ishlay” (382).</p>	G’alaba
<p>INSOF [a. – justice, fairness, impartiality] A sense of justice and conscientiousness, honesty and fairness in dealing with people at work. “Vale ish bilur kishi olida ravshan va insofliq el qoshida mubayyandurkim, bu ish bila ul ish orasida ko’p farq bordur” (141).</p>	Insof
<p>ZULM [a. – oppression; injustice] The oppression of rulers and governors against citizens, and of tyrants against the oppressed; cruelty, tyranny. “Xisravshohning el kuni zulm va besarliqqa o’rgangan el, elga zulm qila boshladilar” (183).</p>	Zulm

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KITOB [a. – written, bound work]

1 A printed work (including an ancient manuscript) consisting of sheets of certain text, bound together, and having a volume of at least 48 pages.

2 In general, a complete work about a certain person, event, etc., usually intended for publication (as a book). “Alalxusus, turkiy devoni ham borkim, anda toza mazmunlar topib, aytibdur va masnaviy **kitobi** ham borkim, oti “Mubayyin” dir “(460).

Kitob

Conclusion

The analysis shows that Arabic loanwords in the *Baburnama* display diverse patterns of semantic behavior, reflecting the dynamic nature of lexical borrowing in Uzbek. A considerable number of items have preserved their original meanings, forming a stable group of semantically equivalent loanwords. At the same time, other lexemes exhibit semantic expansion, narrowing, or shift, confirming that borrowed vocabulary participates fully in the internal development of the Uzbek semantic system.

The high frequency and functional integration of Arabic-derived words indicate that many are no longer perceived by speakers as foreign elements. Instead, they have become an organic component of Uzbek lexical resources. Further large-scale corpus-based research may refine our understanding of the mechanisms and chronology of semantic change in borrowed vocabulary.

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