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## LINGUOPOETIC FEATURES OF SIMILES IN THE EPIC “ALPOMISH”

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### Abstract

This article examines the linguopoetic features of similes in the epic “Alpomish.” It highlights the functions of similes in creating imagery, expressing the inner and outer states of characters, intensifying emotional and expressive effect, and representing national-cultural semantics. The study also analyzes the structural-semantic nature of similes, their extended forms, and their role in epic discourse. As a result, it is shown that similes in the epic “Alpomish” are one of the important linguopoetic devices of epic poetics.

**Keywords:** Epic “Alpomish”, folklore language, simile, -day/-dek, linguopoetics, epic language, figurative device, axiological semantics.

### Introduction

“Alpomish” is regarded as one of the major and authoritative monuments of the epic heritage of the Turkic peoples, a shared epic that has survived among various Turkic communities under different titles and in multiple versions.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, within the Uzbek epic tradition it occupies a distinct and eminent place as a

<sup>1</sup> Murodov M., Ergashev A. *Alpomishnoma: Surxondaryo talqini*. – Toshkent: Mehnat, 1999. – B. 12.

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supreme embodiment of historical memory, national values, and poetic imagination.<sup>2</sup>

The artistic power of the epic's language is manifested above all in its system of figurative devices. Among these, similes are especially prominent and dynamic, serving to convey, in vivid and imaginative form, the hero's strength, majesty, psychological state, beauty, and social standing. As one of the most ancient and enduring forms of artistic thought, the simile assumes particular significance in folkloric discourse. By comparing two objects or phenomena on the basis of a shared feature, it not only clarifies meaning but also expresses aesthetic evaluation, emotional attitude, and the popular worldview embedded in collective consciousness. From this perspective, the study of similes in "Alpomish" as a distinct linguopoetic object makes it possible to reveal more precisely the internal mechanisms of the epic's poetics.

### Review of the Literature on the Topic

In Uzbek linguistics, the phenomenon of simile has been investigated from a range of perspectives as an important linguistic device that contributes to artistic thought, the creation of national imagery, and the aesthetic impact of a text. Research in this field has addressed the theoretical nature of simile, its semantic and stylistic features, its linguopoetic potential, and its use in the language of folk epics.

M. Mukarramov's work "Simile in the Uzbek language" is regarded as one of the most important studies in Uzbek linguistics devoted specifically to simile. In this work, theoretical conclusions are advanced concerning the structure of simile, its semantic nature, and the grammatical means through which it is expressed<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Mirzayev T. Dostonlar gultoji // O'zbek xalq ijodi yodgorliklari. 100 jildlik. – Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyot-matbaa ijodiy uyi, 2015. – 1-j. – B. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Mukarramov M. O'zbek tilida o'xshatish. - Toshkent: Fan, 1976. - B. 7.

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N.Mahmudov interprets similes as products of figurative thinking and demonstrates their connection with national perception, evaluative criteria, and systems of imagery.<sup>4</sup>

The “Explanatory dictionary of similes in the uzbek language”, compiled by N.Mahmudov and D.Khudoyberganova, is an important practical source for identifying the semantic and figurative value of simile units.<sup>5</sup>

D. S.Khudoyberganova analyzes simile constructions in Uzbek from semantic and stylistic perspectives, elucidating their expressive potential in discourse.<sup>6</sup> Her views associated with the anthropocentric approach also provide a methodological basis for interpreting similes as evaluative and meaning-generating units within the text.<sup>7</sup>

The linguopoetic potential of similes in the language of folk epics has been explored more extensively in the studies of G.Jumanazarova.<sup>8</sup> In addition, her doctoral dissertation devoted to the linguopoetics of the language of Fazil Yuldash o‘g‘li’s epics is significant for its comprehensive study of the language of folk epics. These studies provide a solid theoretical foundation for analyzing similes in “Alpomish” as a distinct linguopoetic object<sup>9</sup>.

The language of the epic “Alpomish” and the artistic function of similes within it have also been examined specifically in certain studies. In particular, S.Yoldosheva elucidates the ideological and aesthetic functions of similes in “Alpomish”<sup>10</sup>

In recent years, the linguocultural features of “Alpomish” have also begun to attract focused scholarly attention. In D.A.Ashurov’s monograph “The

<sup>4</sup> Mahmudov N. O‘xshatishlar - obrazli tafakkur mahsuli // O‘zbek tili va adabiyoti. - Toshkent, 2011. - No 3. - B. 19-24; Mahmudov N. O‘xshatishlar va milliy obraz // O‘zbek tili va adabiyoti. - Toshkent, 2013. - No 1. - B. 3-8.

<sup>5</sup> Mahmudov N., Xudoyberganova D. O‘zbek tili o‘xshatishlarining izohli lug‘ati. - Toshkent: Ma’naviyat, 2013. - B. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Худойбергано́ва Д.С. *Семантический и стилистический анализ конструкций уподобления в узбекском языке*: Автореф. дисс. ... канд. филол. наук. – Тошкент, 1989. – Б. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Xudoyberganova D. Matnning antropotsentrik tadqiqi. - Toshkent: Fan, 2013. - B. 122.

<sup>8</sup> Jumanazarova G. *Xalq dostonlaridagi o‘xshatishlarning lingvopoetik imkoniyatlari*. – Toshkent: Fan, 2011. – B. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Jumanazarova G. *Xalq dostonlaridagi o‘xshatishlarning lingvopoetik imkoniyatlari*. - Toshkent: Fan, 2011. - B. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Йўлдошева С. «Алпомиш» дostonидаги ўхшатишларнинг ғоявий-эстетик функцияси // Ўзбек тили ва адабиёти. – Тошкент, 1986, №1. – Б. 47-52.

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linguocultural features of the epic “Alpomish”, a number of figurative devices in the language of the epic, including similes, are analyzed in relation to national cultural codes, ethnic modes of thought, and the folk worldview. This approach demonstrates the necessity of considering similes not only in their linguistic and stylistic dimensions, but also in their cultural and semantic nature.<sup>11</sup>

### Research Methodology

The study employed descriptive, linguopoetic, semantic-stylistic, and contextual methods of analysis. In contemporary research specifically devoted to the linguistic investigation of “Alpomish”, one may likewise observe the integrated application of classification, description, semantic analysis, system-structural analysis, and comparative-historical methods.

### Analysis and Results

Within a linguopoetic approach, similes are interpreted not merely as formal-structural phenomena, but as modes through which artistic thought is manifested. In the text, they generate a richly varied system of images, reveal the psychological states of characters, provide an emotional background to the dynamics of events, and ensure the aesthetic integrity of epic representation. Particularly in epic discourse, similes perform not simply the function of “showing” an event, but of making it “felt”: the listener or reader not only understands the depicted situation, but also experiences it emotionally.

In “Alpomish”, similes fully realize this linguopoetic function. In the text of the epic, the characters’ physical power, spiritual fortitude, beauty, and related qualities are frequently compared to natural phenomena, animals, celestial bodies, and objects of everyday life.

<sup>11</sup> Ashurov D.A. “Alpomish” dostonining lingvokulturologik xususiyatlari. Monografiya. - Namangan: “Sunrise-pro”, 2025. - B. 55.

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D.Ashurov, who examined the similes in the text of “Alpomish” from a linguocultural perspective, classifies them – on the basis of theme and cultural codes—into several groups: similes associated with the names of plants (biomorphic code), with celestial bodies and natural phenomena (spatial code), with the names of animals and insects (zoomorphic code), with bird names (also zoomorphic code), with the names of objects and material things (object code), with religious concepts (religious code), and with mythological names.<sup>12</sup> In our view, this classification makes it possible to study the similes in “Alpomish” systematically from a linguocultural perspective, since it clearly reveals the national-cultural semantics of simile standards, their connection with the folk worldview, and their conceptual load within the epic text.

In linguistic theory, the means that express the category of simile include the suffixes -day / -dek, -simon, -ona, -namo, -omuz, -cha, -larcha, and -chasiga, as well as such lexical markers as kabi, singari, xuddi, go‘yo, and misli. These units are not functionally and stylistically identical in discourse. In particular, the suffix -day is distinguished by its more frequent use in living colloquial speech and epic narration, whereas the suffix -dek and the marker kabi are also highly productive in the relatively bookish layer of literary language.

The suffix -day / -dek is the most frequently used affix in the expression of simile relations. According to A.Abdullayev, words and word combinations formed with the suffix -day serve to introduce expressiveness or, at the very least, precision and imagery into an utterance.<sup>13</sup> This theoretical position can once again be confirmed on the basis of the text of “Alpomish”.

The materials of the epic show that similes formed with -day / -dek often serve to express the hero’s strength and might, grandeur, emotional state, or outward appearance. For example, in structures such as “Sherday bo‘lib endi yo‘lga

<sup>12</sup> Ashurov D.A. “Alpomish” dostonining lingvokulturologik xususiyatlari. Monografiya. – Namangan: “Sunrise-pro”, 2025. – B. 55.

<sup>13</sup> Abdullayev A. *O‘zbek tilida ekspressivlik ifodalashning sintaktik usuli*. – Toshkent: O‘zbekiston SSR «Fan» nashriyoti, 1987. – B. 33.

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kirgandi” (“He now set out like a lion”), the hero’s entering into action is presented not as a simple statement of fact, but as a poetic condition enriched with power, determination, and martial spirit. In this sense, simile aesthetically remodels epic reality.

This elevates the image from the level of abstract description to that of a concrete, visible, and memorable representation. Thus, when Alpomish’s strength is compared to a mountain, a lion, or a dragon, the simile conveys not only quantitative force, but also semantically loads the image with the hero’s invincibility and threatening power.

Anglamaydi bunday mardi maydoni,  
Sherday bo‘lib endi yo‘lga kirgandi.  
Kim dushman bo‘lsa boshin oladi,  
Hammaning ko‘nglidan chiqqan to‘radi(r).  
(A.369.)

One of the important characteristics of similes in the epic is their organic connection with folk cognition. The sources of comparison are often drawn from pastoral life, nature, customs, and images specific to epic tradition. This elevates similes beyond the status of mere artistic ornament, making them an expression of the national worldview. As a result, simile performs a dual function in the epic text: on the one hand, it intensifies aesthetic impact; on the other, it becomes a linguistic unit that preserves the national-cultural code.

Sen ketding, bizlar bo‘taday bo‘zlab,  
Borolmadik Qalmoq yurtini izlab,  
Endi yurgin dushman bag‘rini tuzlab.  
(A.389.)

From a linguopoetic perspective, another important point is that the similes in Alpomish are often extended and multi-component, assuming the form of a descriptive microtext rather than a simple comparison. Such similes function not merely as isolated words or phrases, but as whole poetic constructions. They

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appear at significant points in the plot, intensifying dramatic tension or deepening the character's inner state:

Barchin turur hurday bo'lib,  
Tishi gavhar durday bo'lib,  
Jamollari oyday bo'lib,  
Misli asov toyday bo'lib,  
Sag'rilari yoyday bo'lib,  
Bir ming qo'yli boyday bo'lib,  
Ko'zi quralayday bo'lib.

(A.87.)

This passage is an excellent example in Alpomish of a complete descriptive microtext created on the basis of extended, coordinated similes. Here Barchin's portrait is gradually unfolded through a sequential system of comparisons. Structurally, the similes are built according to the same model—**NOUN + -day bo'lib**—which, through syntactic parallelism and rhythmic repetition, produces poetic unity. This parallel construction ensures not only the compositional coherence of the description, but also heightens its aesthetic intensity.

In the text, the similes are not concentrated on a single point; rather, they reveal different facets of the image layer by layer. The comparison hurday places Barchin within the sphere of divine purity and beauty; the phrase gavhar durday (“white and gleaming, used especially of a person's teeth”)<sup>14</sup> activates the semantics of delicacy and priceless value; the simile oyday (“like the moon”) signifies radiance, clarity, and perfection. These units establish the semantic direction of aesthetic elevation.

The subsequent comparisons further animate the portrait: in the image asov toyday (“like an untamed colt”), exuberance and natural vitality are expressed;

<sup>14</sup> Qarang. Mahmudov N., Xudoyberganova D. *O'zbek tili o'xshatishlarining izohli lug'ati*. – Toshkent: Ma'naviyat, 2013. – B. 72.

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yoyday (“like a bow”) in describing her figure reflects both grace and the epic ideal of bodily form.

The simile *bir ming qo‘yli boyday* (“like a rich man with a thousand sheep”) adds a socio-status layer to the aesthetic portrayal, harmonizing beauty with prosperity and majesty. D.Ashurov emphasizes that the simile “*Bir ming qo‘yli boyday bo‘lib*” semantically alludes to the phraseological expression *qo‘yi mingga yetmoq* (“to have one’s flock reach a thousand”) and expresses the character’s spiritual-psychological condition, rank, and mood.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the comparison *ko‘zi quralayday* (“eyes like a gazelle/fawn”) completes the image through a delicate, tender, and enchanting gaze.

This system of similes does not consist of simple comparisons; rather, it is a descriptive construction whose elements are semantically interconnected and compose a unified whole. Each comparison activates a distinct semantic field – divinity, refinement, radiance, vitality, graceful figure, social status, elegance – and together they create Barchin’s idealized image. The similes become not merely aesthetic embellishments, but a linguopoetic mechanism that shapes the epic ideal of womanhood.

From a linguopoetic point of view, the passage is distinguished by several features. First, it is based on a system of coordinated similes. The repeated formative *-day bo‘lib* rhythmically unifies the description and gradually elevates the image. Second, the similes possess a gradational character, intensifying semantic force step by step: each successive comparison supplements and amplifies the effect of the previous one. Third, although the portrayal is free of direct conflict or dramatic tension, it nonetheless enhances the aesthetic weight of epic discourse and, by elevating the worth of the character, creates a foundation for the subsequent development of the plot.

<sup>15</sup> Ashurov D.A. “Alpomish” dostonining lingvokulturologik xususiyatlari. Monografiya. – Namangan: “Sunrise-pro”, 2025. – B. 84.

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Thus, in *Alpomish*, similes as a linguopoetic category manifest the following principal features:

1. the concretization and vivification of the image;
2. the indirect expression of the authorial (that is, collective folk) evaluation;
3. the aesthetic remodeling of epic reality;
4. the transmission of national thought and cultural experience through language;
5. the enrichment of the emotional and expressive layer of the text.

These features make it possible to regard similes not as mere stylistic ornamentation in “*Alpomish*”, but as one of the central mechanisms of epic poetics. Through them, the events of the epic are transformed into artistic reality, while its heroes are закреплен as living and powerful images in the memory of folklore.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis demonstrates that similes in the epic “*Alpomish*” constitute one of the principal linguopoetic devices that ensure the imagery, expressive force, and aesthetic integrity of the epic text. They serve to render, in a vivid and figurative manner grounded in folk artistic thinking, the characters’ physical power, psychological state, outward appearance, and social status. At the same time, similes function in the text of the epic as linguistic units that transmit national modes of thought, cultural experience, and aesthetic evaluation. Extended and coordinated similes, moreover, form poetic microtexts that help to reveal different facets of an image in a gradual and layered manner. For this reason, the similes in “*Alpomish*” may rightly be regarded as one of the central mechanisms of epic poetics. Future research on these similes from comparative inter-variant, linguocultural, and cognitive perspectives would contribute to revealing even deeper dimensions of the epic’s poetics.

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