



HISTORICAL AND ETYMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL LAYERS IN ALISHER NAVOI'S MAJOLIS UN-NAFOIS

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Abstract. This article presents a comprehensive historical-etymological analysis of the lexical system of Alisher Navoi's *Majolis un-nafois*, focusing on the stratification of Turkic, Arabic, and Iranian elements within the text. The study employs a comparative lexicological approach based on data from the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* to determine the proportion of lexemes retained in modern usage versus those that have become archaic or remain confined to historical contexts.

Keywords: *Majolis un-nafois*; historical lexicology; etymological stratification; loanwords; Arabic lexical layer; phonetic doublets.

The literary legacy of Alisher Navoi constitutes a cornerstone in the formation and historical evolution of the Uzbek literary language. His prose work *Majolis un-nafois*, regarded as one of the earliest and most refined examples of the *tazkira* genre, is of particular significance not only for literary history but also for linguistic research. The text reflects the lexical diversity of the 15th-century literary language, characterized by the interaction of a Turkic base with extensive Arabic and Persian-Tajik borrowings.

Particular attention is paid to phonetic doublets, whose distribution and functional differentiation provide valuable evidence of the processes of linguistic normalization and semantic specialization in the 15th-century Uzbek literary language. Quantitative analysis reveals the dominant role of Arabic lexical elements, reflecting their central position in the intellectual, religious, and cultural life of the period. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the multi-layered lexical structure of early Uzbek literary prose and highlight *Majolis un-nafois* as a key source for historical lexicology and etymological studies.

Lexical borrowing is a universal mechanism of language development, arising from sustained cultural, intellectual, and sociopolitical contact. The Uzbek language, like many others, has undergone successive phases of enrichment through interaction with other linguistic traditions. In this respect, *Majolis un-*



nafois provides a unique opportunity to examine the historical and etymological layers of Uzbek vocabulary at a formative stage of its literary standardization.

The primary aim of this study is to identify the historical-etymological composition of the lexemes employed in *Majolis un-nafois*, to assess their status in relation to the modern Uzbek lexicon, and to analyze the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the principal lexical strata.

The research is based on a combination of descriptive-analytical methods, comparative lexicological analysis, statistical evaluation, and historical-linguistic interpretation. These approaches enable a systematic examination of lexical stratification, phonetic variation, and semantic adaptation.

A comparative analysis of the lexemes occurring in *Majolis un-nafois* with entries in the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* demonstrates that, out of 4,260 identified lexemes, only 1,755 (41.2%) are attested in the modern dictionary, while 2,505 lexemes (58.8%) are absent. This finding confirms the predominantly historical character of the work's vocabulary.

Among the unattested lexemes, archaic words constitute 1,264 items (29.7%), whereas proper nouns account for 892 items (20.9%). The latter category is dominated by anthroponyms, including 287 personal names and 445 names of poets, alongside 102 toponyms and 58 titles of literary works. Such a distribution is directly обусловлено by the biographical and encyclopedic nature of the tazkira genre.

A notable feature of the text is the presence of 52 phonetic doublets, which serve as indicators of ongoing processes of phonological normalization and semantic differentiation. Of these, 18 belong to the Turkic layer, 28 to the Arabic layer, and 5 to the Iranian historical-etymological stratum. Lexical pairs such as *adl // adil*, *asl // asil*, *mushkil // mushkul*, and *doim // doyim* illustrate not only phonetic variation but also functional specialization within the borrowing process.

The overall historical-etymological composition of the lexicon is distributed as follows: Turkic lexemes – 584 items (13.7%); Arabic lexemes – 1,661 items (39%); Iranian lexemes – 545 items (12.8%). In addition, mixed-origin lexemes account for 578 items (13.6%). These proportions underscore the dominant position of Arabic as the principal source of scholarly, religious, and administrative vocabulary in the 15th century.

Although lexemes of Chinese, Sogdian, Greek, Mongolian, and Indian origin are also attested, their transmission into Uzbek occurred primarily through



Arabic. Consequently, they are methodologically classified within the Arabic lexical layer.

The present study demonstrates that *Majolis un-nafois* is a crucial linguistic monument reflecting the historical and etymological development of the Uzbek literary language. The high proportion of lexemes absent from modern dictionaries confirms the diachronic value of the text and its importance for reconstructing earlier stages of lexical development.

The predominance of the Arabic lexical layer reflects the central role of Arabic in the intellectual and cultural life of the 15th century, while phonetic doublets provide empirical evidence for the gradual standardization of the literary language. Taken together, these findings establish *Majolis un-nafois* as an indispensable source for research in historical lexicology, etymology, and the study of linguistic contact in Central Asia.

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