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LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE NAMES OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S ANCESTORS AND FAMILY MEMBERS IN LITERARY MONUMENTS

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Abstract: This article analyzes, from an onomastic perspective, the names of the ancestors and family members of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) occurring in literary monuments, particularly in materials related to Rabghuzi's Qisasi Rabghuziy. The distinctions between personal names, nasab, kunya, and laqab, as well as the lexical meanings of names and their functions within literary texts, are examined. Using anthroponyms such as Abdullah, Amina, Halima, Abu Talib, Abu Lahab, Khadija, Aisha, Fatima, and Qasim as examples, the relationship between etymological meaning and cultural interpretation is demonstrated. The analysis shows that the original lexical meaning of a name does not, by itself, prove either the character of a historical person or the reason for assigning that name. Distinguishing literary narratives, historical reports, and linguistic explanations is identified as a fundamental methodological requirement for the interpretation of names.

Keywords: anthroponym, Qisasi Rabghuziy, personal name, nasab, kunya, laqab, etymology, historical onomastics, linguoculturology.

Introduction

In classical literary monuments, the name of a historical person not only identifies a participant in an event but also activates a particular religious and cultural memory. Anthroponyms associated with the family and relatives of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) constitute such a layer of names. They function in indicating lineage, explaining relationships between characters, and expressing moral evaluation.

Rabghuzi's Qisasi Rabghuziy is one of the major monuments of the Turkic narrative tradition [1; 2]. When studying the names occurring in this work, it is necessary to take into account the literary and didactic nature of the qissa genre. Since historical reports, religious narratives, and artistic representation coexist within a single textual framework, not every detail can be regarded as historical evidence of equal status. Modern studies also emphasize the educational function and cultural adaptation characteristic of Rabghuzi's narratives [3].

The purpose of this study is to interpret names associated with family and kinship relations on the basis of their structure, semantic motivation, and textual function. The lexical root of a name, its function in identifying a person, and its subsequent literary and cultural interpretation are examined separately. This approach makes it possible to study anthroponyms not merely as a list of translations but as meaning-forming elements of a historical text.

Materials and Research Methods

The material of the study consists of anthroponymic examples from Qisasi Rabghuziy, hadiths relating to personal names and kunyahs, and lexical descriptions of Arabic words [1; 4–8]. The descriptive method was used to classify the names; structural-semantic analysis was applied to distinguish their constituent components; and contextual analysis was employed to explain the

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function of each name within the narrative. In the onomastic classification, the principle of considering both the linguistic form of a personal name and its social usage was adopted [9].

It is necessary to distinguish between the etymology of a name and the reason why a particular individual was given that specific name. The existence of a lexical meaning of a word in a dictionary does not prove the historical motivation behind the naming. Likewise, the description of a character in a narrative cannot directly reveal the original purpose for which the name was selected. Therefore, assumptions concerning the assignment of names for protective purposes, the derivation of a name from the name of a planet, or the representation of character traits through a name require independent evidence.

Distinctions between Ism, Nasab, Kunya, and Laqab

In the Arabic anthroponymic system, ism, nasab, kunya, and laqab are interconnected but functionally distinct units. The ism is the principal individual name of a person. The nasab indicates parental or ancestral relationships through elements such as ibn or bint. A kunya is usually formed with the components Abu or Umm. A laqab, in turn, designates a person through an additional feature, quality, or descriptive characteristic. One individual may simultaneously be referred to by several of these naming units.

For example, in the form Abdullah ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Abdullah is the personal name, whereas the following component represents the nasab. Interpreting Abu Talib merely as “seeker” omits the first component of the kunya; the complete structure means “father of Talib.” The lexical meaning of the component Talib as “one who seeks” or “seeker” belongs to a separate lexical level [4]. The same principle applies to forms such as Umm Habiba, Umm Salama, and Abu al-Qasim.

A kunya does not always indicate an actual parental relationship. There are traditions demonstrating that even a child could be addressed by a kunya. The hadith concerning the address to Abu Umayr provides an example [8]. Thus, although the structural form of a kunya expresses kinship, in communication it may also convey respect, intimacy, or affection. This aspect is particularly important when translating kunyahs found in literary texts.

Semantic Interpretation of the Names of Ancestors and Close Relatives

The name Abdullah consists of the components abd and Allah and means “servant of Allah.” Its structure explicitly expresses religious affiliation. However, the fact that the name is theophoric, that is, contains the name of a deity, does not necessarily indicate the religious belief of every bearer of the name to the same degree. The historical individual, the period, and the naming tradition must be considered separately.

The semantic basis of the name Amina is associated with the concepts of safety and tranquility. The forms Omina and Amina may differ in transliteration and Uzbek pronunciation traditions. Referring to the original Arabic form helps prevent the erroneous identification of phonetically similar names. The name Halima, meanwhile, is associated with the semantic field of hilm, referring to gentleness, patience, and composure [4]. In Rabghuzi’s text, Halima’s mention as a wet nurse requires a distinction between biological lineage and milk kinship [1].

The name Abd al-Muttalib cannot be adequately explained solely through a literal translation of its components. Not all names containing abd belong to the same religious naming model; the second component may also be a personal name. Therefore, it is incorrect to classify Abdullah and Abd al-Muttalib within the same semantic type merely on the basis of their structural similarity. The

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anthroponymic structure and the historical naming tradition must be examined in relation to one another.

The naming unit Abu Lahab resembles a kunya in its external structure, but within the literary-religious context it functions as a laqab. The component lahab means “flame.” In the Qur’anic Surah al-Masad, the occurrence of this name in a context associated with fire creates a certain semantic correspondence [10]. However, this correspondence alone does not prove when or why the name was originally assigned. The etymological interpretation should therefore be distinguished from the moral evaluation presented in the narrative.

Caution is also required when interpreting the names Abbas and Hamza. Drawing conclusions about the character of an entire people solely on the basis of the lexical meaning of a name lies beyond the scope of linguistic evidence. Likewise, the courage or determination displayed by a character in a literary work should not automatically be equated with the original motivation behind the name. In the historical account concerning Hamza, care must also be taken not to confuse the person who killed him with participants in later narratives concerning the event. In al-Bukhari’s narration, Hamza’s death is recounted by Wahshi [5].

Female Names and the Representation of Family Relationships

Names such as Khadija, Aisha, Hafsa, Zaynab, Safiyya, and Maymuna acquire particular cultural meanings in religious and literary texts. Although the lexical basis of the name Khadija is associated with the notion of premature birth, this does not allow one to draw conclusions about the birth circumstances of every person bearing the name Khadija [4]. The historically formed lexical motivation of a name may differ from its later use as a conventional personal name.

The name Aisha is associated with the concepts of life and living; interpreting it categorically as “immortal” would constitute a semantic expansion. The name Maymuna is associated with blessedness and happiness, while Safiyya is connected with the semantic fields of selection and purity [4]. The phonetic similarity between Safiyya and the Greek name Sophia does not establish a common etymological origin. Demonstrating etymological relatedness requires evidence from historical phonetics and the pathways of linguistic borrowing.

In naming units such as Umm Habiba and Umm Salama, the component Umm must be preserved. Translating them simply as “beloved” or “one who saves” does not reflect the complete structure. The nominative function of the kunya should first be analyzed, followed by the lexical meaning of the personal-name component within it. Such differentiation helps avoid the error of classifying female personal names and female kunyahs as a single category.

Because the name Zaynab belongs to several historical individuals, the referent must be clarified in context through nasab or kinship indicators. In a narration in Sahih Muslim, Zaynab, the daughter of Umm Salama, and Zaynab bint Jahsh are mentioned as distinct individuals [11]. Therefore, the repetition of the same personal name within a text does not necessarily mean that the text refers to the same person. The referent of a name, that is, the individual denoted by it, is determined by lineage and the surrounding event.

Names of Children and Cultural Memory

The name Fatima belongs to the Arabic semantic field associated with weaning. It should not be morphologically equated in an absolute sense with the form “one who has been separated,” since the grammatical model of a personal name and its traditional interpretation may differ [4]. In the combination Fatima al-Zahra, the descriptive element attached to the personal name strengthens

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associations with brightness and light. Here, the function of the primary personal name should be distinguished from that of the additional descriptive designation.

Although Zahra and Zuhra sound similar, they cannot be regarded without evidence as successive historical forms of the same name. In particular, the paired use of the names Fatima and Zuhra represents a separate subject for ethnolinguistic research. To establish such a relationship, naming practices, regional variants, and historical written sources must be compared. Graphic similarity or modern naming customs alone do not provide sufficient evidence for constructing a chain of etymological development.

The names Ruqayya and Umm Kulthum are likewise understood not only through their lexical meanings but also through family events and kinship relations. The kunya-like structure of Umm Kulthum does not prevent it from functioning as a stable personal designation within a text. This demonstrates that the external structural model alone is insufficient for classifying anthroponyms; both structure and actual nominative function must be considered together.

The name Qasim is associated with the semantic field of distribution or apportionment and appears as a component of the kunya Abu al-Qasim [4; 6]. The distinction between a personal name and a kunya in the hadith is linguistically s

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