

Etymological Stratification and Semantic-Functional Characteristics of Zoolexemes in Alisher Navoi's *Layli and Majnun*

OZODBEK IMOMALI O'G'LI DANABEKOV

*Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University
of Uzbek Language and Literature, Uzbekistan*

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the etymological stratification and semantic-functional behavior of zoolexemes in Alisher Navoi's Layli and Majnun. The primary material is drawn from the 1991 scholarly edition of the poem, with lexical interpretation supported by historical and etymological dictionaries of Chagatai, Turkic, Persian, and Arabic vocabulary. A purposive corpus of recurrent animal-related units is examined through historical-etymological, contextual-semantic, stylistic, and linguocultural analysis. The results show a multilayered lexical system in which inherited Turkic items (e.g., bo'ri "wolf," arslon "lion," qoplon "leopard," kiyik "deer/gazelle," it "dog") coexist with Persian or Persian-mediated forms (e.g., ohu "gazelle," sher "lion," ajdar "dragon," babr "tiger," mo'r "ant") and Arabic learned vocabulary (e.g., hudhud "hoopoe," aqrab "scorpion/Scorpio," vahsh "wild beast"). The coexistence of Turkic and Persian near-synonyms is especially significant because it expands the poem's stylistic and symbolic repertoire. Contextually, the units move beyond literal nomination and acquire personifying, affective, metaphorical, cosmological, and socially evaluative functions. In the desert episodes, predators become companions in Majnun's suffering; in zodiacal contexts, animal names are resemanticized as celestial signs; and in the dog imagery, a socially pejorative lexeme undergoes deliberate axiological inversion. The study argues that etymological origin does not

mechanically determine poetic function; rather, Navoi activates the historical resources of a multilingual literary lexicon according to context, register, and symbolic purpose.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, *Layli and Majnun*, zoolexeme, etymology, historical lexicology, semantics, Chagatai, linguoculture, animal imagery

1. INTRODUCTION

Animal-related vocabulary occupies a distinctive place in the language of classical literature because it simultaneously names elements of the natural world and participates in the construction of culturally recognizable meanings. In Alisher Navoi's *Layli and Majnun*, animal names are especially important in the episodes where Qays-Majnun withdraws from society and enters the desert. The shift in spatial environment is accompanied by a shift in the poem's lexical and symbolic organization: wolves, lions, leopards, gazelles, birds, insects, and other creatures cease to function merely as components of landscape and become participants in the hero's emotional world. Their lexical forms therefore provide a productive point of entry into the interaction between historical lexicology, poetic semantics, and cultural symbolism.

The language of Navoi is also historically significant because it represents a highly developed Chagatai literary idiom shaped by sustained contact among Turkic, Persian, and Arabic linguistic traditions. Its lexicon contains inherited Turkic vocabulary alongside Persian and Arabic borrowings that had become integral to the written language of Central Asia. In a poetic text, these layers are not simply passive historical residues. They can generate stylistic contrast, synonymic variation, elevated register, intertextual allusion, and semantic specialization. The pair *arslon/sher* "lion," for example, illustrates how a Turkic item and a Persian item may coexist within the same literary system while contributing different rhythmic, collocational, or symbolic possibilities.

The present study therefore treats the zoolexicon of Layli and Majnun as a historically stratified and functionally dynamic subsystem. The term zoolexeme is used here in a broad appellative sense for lexical units denoting animals, birds, insects, or animal-based celestial signs. This usage is preferable to zoonym in the present article because zoonym is often reserved for proper names of animals in onomastic terminology. The analysis focuses on two related questions: 1) which principal etymological layers are represented by the selected zoolexemes, and 2) how do these units change their semantic and pragmatic value in Navoi's poetic context?

A further methodological concern is necessary. Modern concepts such as ecocriticism or ecolinguistics can illuminate the representation of human-nature relations, but they should not be projected anachronistically onto a fifteenth-century text as if Navoi were formulating a modern ecological theory. Accordingly, this article uses ecological and animal-studies perspectives only as interpretive tools. Its central evidence remains linguistic: lexical origin, contextual meaning, semantic transformation, synonymy, personification, and the relation between literal and symbolic reference.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of literature and the non-human world has developed along several complementary lines. Ecocriticism established a framework for examining how literary texts organize relations among humans, landscapes, and other living beings (Glottfelty & Fromm 1996; Buell 1995; Bate 2000). Animal studies, meanwhile, has emphasized that animals in cultural texts are not neutral decorative objects but participants in systems of value, representation, hierarchy, and identification (Berger 1980; Serpell 1996). These approaches are useful for describing the unusual intimacy between Majnun and the creatures of the desert, provided that the historical specificity of the poem is preserved.

For the linguistic dimension, cognitive semantics explains how lexical items can move from concrete denotation to metaphorical and evaluative meaning. Conceptual Metaphor

Theory demonstrates that embodied and culturally salient domains, including the animal world, become source domains for the conceptualization of human character and experience (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987). Such processes are particularly relevant to zoomorphic vocabulary, where literal animal properties may be activated, suppressed, inverted, or transferred to a human referent. The article also draws on the broader semiotic insight that animal signs participate in culturally inherited systems of classification and symbolic thought (Lévi-Strauss 1962; Sebeok 1972).

A diachronic approach is equally necessary. Chagatai developed as a literary Turkic language in a multilingual environment, and its vocabulary reflects sustained interaction with Persian and Arabic (Eckmann 1966). For the inherited Turkic stratum, Clauson's *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (1972) provides a basis for identifying forms with early Turkic attestation. For Persian and Perso-Arabic literary vocabulary, Steingass (1892) remains a useful historical lexicographic reference. Meanings within Navoi's oeuvre are also checked against the four-volume Alisher Navoi's *asarlari tilining izohli lug'ati* (Fozilov 1983-1985). These sources allow the article to distinguish lexical history from poetic function: the former concerns the pathway by which a unit entered or persisted in the literary language, while the latter concerns what the unit does in a particular passage.

Research on Navoi has long demonstrated the density of symbolic, Sufi, and intertextual meaning in his poetic language. Yet the animal vocabulary of *Layli and Majnun* has often been discussed primarily as imagery. The specific interaction between etymological layering and context-sensitive semantic function remains less systematically described. This gap is important because a historical lexicon can reveal not only where a word comes from but also why a poet may select one member of a synonymic set in one context and another elsewhere. The present study addresses this issue through a focused analysis of recurrent animal-related units in the poem.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary source is Vol. 8 of Alisher Navoi's *Mukammal asarlar to 'plami*, containing *Layli va Majnun* (Navoi 1991). The quoted passages and page references follow that edition. Because the article is designed as a qualitative lexical-semantic study rather than a frequency dictionary, the dataset is purposive rather than exhaustive. It consists of recurrent or functionally salient zoolexemes that appear in episodes central to Majnun's desert life, his interaction with animals, and the poem's cosmological imagery.

Four procedures were applied. First, historical-etymological analysis was used to assign each selected form to a major lexical layer: inherited Turkic, Persian/Persian-mediated, or Arabic learned vocabulary. Where the ultimate origin of a form is debated or more complex than its immediate route into Chagatai, the classification refers to its literary-historical layer in Chagatai rather than making an absolute proto-etymological claim. Second, contextual-semantic analysis was used to distinguish literal nomination from metaphorical, affective, symbolic, and cosmological meanings. Third, stylistic analysis identified parallelism, enumeration, personification, semantic inversion, and contrast. Fourth, a linguocultural reading was used to interpret culturally conventional associations only where they are supported by the immediate textual context.

For clarity, the Uzbek/Chagatai passages are reproduced in the modernized Latin transliteration represented in the source article. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations of the quoted passages from *Layli and Majnun* are by the author and are intended to convey the semantic relations relevant to the linguistic analysis rather than to reproduce the poem's meter. This distinction is important because the present objective is lexical-semantic interpretation, not a critical edition or a poetic translation.

4. ETYMOLOGICAL STRATIFICATION OF THE ZOOLEXICON

The selected vocabulary demonstrates the multilingual architecture of Navoi's literary language. The inherited Turkic

stratum supplies many basic animal terms associated with everyday cognition and the steppe-desert environment: *bo'ri* "wolf," *arslon* "lion," *qoplon* "leopard," *kiyik* "deer/gazelle," *it* "dog," *chivin* "gnat/mosquito," *g'oz* "goose," *o'rdak* "duck," and *qo'chqor* "ram" belong to the historically Turkic lexical stock or have early Turkic attestation (Clauson 1972). Their presence gives the zoological field a strong native lexical core.

The Persian layer contributes both common and stylistically marked forms. *Ohu* "gazelle," *sher* "lion," *ajdar* "dragon," *babr* "tiger," and *mo'r* "ant" are characteristic of the Persian literary lexicon and entered the Chagatai poetic system through long-standing contact with Persian. *To'ti* "parrot" is best treated here as Persian-mediated literary vocabulary because its established poetic life in Chagatai is inseparable from Persianate literary convention. These units are important not only because they are borrowings but because they coexist with Turkic alternatives. *Ohu* and *kiyik*, or *sher* and *arslon*, create opportunities for register variation, meter, alliteration, collocation, and inherited poetic association.

The Arabic layer is smaller in the selected dataset but semantically specialized. *Hudhud* "hoopoe" carries strong scriptural and literary associations through the Qur'anic story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, while *aqrab* "scorpion" functions both as an animal term and as the name of the zodiacal sign Scorpio. *Vahsh*, from Arabic *wahsh*, functions as a learned collective designation for wild creatures or beasts. These items show how Arabic vocabulary can concentrate religious, learned, classificatory, or cosmological meaning even when the surrounding passage is otherwise built from Turkic and Persian lexemes.

Table 1. *Selected zoolexemes and their principal historical lexical layers*

Lexeme	Gloss	Historical layer	Contextual function
<i>bo'ri</i>	wolf	Turkic	Literal predator; empathetic companion; light imagery through "wolf's eyes"
<i>arslon</i>	lion	Turkic	Strength/predation; Turkic counterpart to <i>sher</i>
<i>qoplon</i>	leopard	Turkic	Predation, danger, desert fauna; later affective alignment

<i>kiyik</i>	deer/ gazelle	Turkic	Gentleness, desert life; near-synonymic relation with <i>ohu</i>
<i>it</i>	dog	Turkic	Social stigma; humility; axiological inversion
<i>chivin</i>	gnat/ mosquito	Turkic	Small-scale creature; participation of even minor life forms
<i>g'oz/ o'rdak</i>	goose / duck	Turkic	Avian nomination in the poem's broader fauna
<i>qo'chqor</i>	ram	Turkic	Animal image; zodiacal/cosmological resemanticization
<i>ohu</i>	gazelle	Persian	Beauty/gentleness; compassion and emotional solidarity
<i>sher</i>	lion / Leo	Persian	Predator; elevated poetic register; zodiacal meaning
<i>ajdar</i>	dragon	Persian	Mythic danger and scale; personified suffering
<i>babr</i>	tiger	Persian	Predatory force; intensification in enumerative sequences
<i>mo'r</i>	ant	Persian	Smallness/weakness; contrast with large predators
<i>to'ti</i>	parrot	Persian-mediated	Speech, eloquence, avian symbolism
<i>hudhud</i>	hoopoe	Arabic	Messenger/wisdom intertext; personified inquiry
<i>aqrab</i>	scorpion /Scorpio	Arabic	Danger/poison; zodiacal sign; semantic inversion toward healing
<i>vahsh</i>	wild beast(s)	Arabic	Learned collective category for wild creatures

The table shows that the poetic field is not organized by etymology alone. Native and borrowed forms coexist inside the same semantic domain, while individual words can move across several functions in the poem. This is especially visible in synonymic doublets. The Turkic *arslon* and Persian *sher* both denote "lion," but *sher* is also productive in cosmological usage as the zodiacal Leo. Likewise, Turkic *kiyik* and Persian *ohu* overlap denotationally while carrying different inherited poetic associations. Such coexistence is a typical feature of a mature contact-based literary lexicon: lexical origin expands the poet's expressive options rather than creating rigid functional compartments.

5. SEMANTIC-FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

a. *Predators as companions*

bo'ri, sher, qoplon
Kelib Majnunni o'rtag'a oliblar,
Aning dardig'a bo'lubondur talablar.
Biri bo'ri, biri sheru qoplon,
Bularkim, bo'ldilar ishqinda giryon. (Navoi 1991: 78)
 "They came and gathered around Majnun,
 drawn toward his suffering.
 One was a wolf, another a lion and a leopard;
 all of them became tearful in his love."

The sequence *bo'ri – sher – qoplon* creates an enumerative chain of predators. At the denotative level, the three lexemes belong to the same zoological macro-field and activate culturally familiar features of danger, strength, and wildness. The syntax reinforces this grouping through parallel enumeration: *biri* "one" introduces members of a common class, while the final predication applies a single emotional state to the group.

The decisive semantic shift occurs in *giryon* "weeping, tearful." Predators that would normally occupy the role of threat are assigned an affective human predicate. This personification does not erase their literal animal identity; rather, it overlays a second semantic plane upon it. The animals remain wolf, lion, and leopard, but their expected behavioral frame is suspended. They become co-sufferers. The poetic effect depends precisely on the tension between lexical expectation and contextual predication: the more strongly an animal is associated with predation, the more striking its transformation into a compassionate companion.

The passage also demonstrates that etymological heterogeneity is poetically unobtrusive. *Bo'ri* and *qoplon* belong to the Turkic layer, whereas *sher* is Persian. In the line, however, the three units form a perfectly coherent semantic series. This is a useful reminder that historical origin and synchronic poetic function operate at different analytical levels. Navoi's literary

language had already integrated such borrowings deeply enough for them to participate in ordinary semantic parallelism.

b. *Ohu and the semantics of sympathy*

*Necha ohuki, sahroda yurur erdi,
Aning dardiga sherik bo'lur erdi.* (Navoi 1991: 97)
Every gazelle that moved through the desert
became a companion to his sorrow.

The Persian loan *ohu* "gazelle" occupies a different affective zone from the predators. In Persianate and Turkic classical poetry, the gazelle is conventionally associated with delicacy, beauty, alertness, and the beloved's eyes. Navoi preserves the animal's literal desert setting but assigns it the relational predicate *dardiga sherik bo'lmoq* "to share someone's pain." The unit therefore moves from zoological nomination to affective alignment.

The important point is not simply that an animal is personified. The contextual role of *ohu* is calibrated to its conventional semantics. Whereas predators undergo a strong inversion from danger to compassion, the gazelle's gentleness makes its sympathetic role less contradictory and more continuous with inherited poetic association. This contrast shows that semantic transformation operates at different degrees: some zoolexemes are radically inverted, while others are contextually extended.

c. *Hudhud and to'ti: Avian lexemes and intertextual value*

*Biri hudhudu biri to'ti misol,
Aning holig'a qilibdirlar savol.* (Navoi 1991: 65)
One is like the hoopoe, another like the parrot;
they ask about his condition.

The lexemes *hudhud* "hoopoe" and *to'ti* "parrot" are semantically richer than generic bird names. *Hudhud* belongs to Arabic learned vocabulary and evokes the well-known scriptural-literary image of the hoopoe as a messenger in the story of

Solomon. In Persian and Turkic mystical literature, the hoopoe also became an emblem of guidance and knowledge. *To'ti*, transmitted through Persian literary usage, is conventionally associated with speech, eloquence, and verbal artistry. Thus the line combines two birds whose cultural semantics are strongly linked with communication.

The predicate *savol qilmoq* “to ask, inquire” activates precisely this communicative potential. The birds are not merely seen or heard; they become questioners. Their lexical-cultural associations and the syntactic predicate reinforce each other, producing an intertextually charged form of personification. The episode thereby expands Majnun’s communicative world beyond human society: non-human creatures acquire the capacity to recognize and inquire into his state.

- d. The wolf’s eyes as light: Semantic inversion in the nocturnal desert

*Tun boshig'a vahsh o'lur erkin jam',
Olingda bo'ri ko'zi erkin sham'. (Navoi 1991: 128)*
At night the wild beasts gather around your head;
before you, the wolf’s eye becomes a lamp.

Here the Arabic collective *vahsh* “wild beast(s)” provides a learned class term, while the Turkic *bo'ri* “wolf” supplies the concrete image. The construction *bo'ri ko'zi ... sham'* “the wolf’s eye ... [is] a lamp” is a compact metaphorical equation. The glowing eye, normally a sign of danger in darkness, is reinterpreted as illumination. This is another case of semantic inversion, but unlike the earlier emotional personification, the transformation is perceptual and functional: a threatening feature becomes a source of guidance.

The metaphor also contributes to the poem’s broader reorganization of value in the desert. Human society has rejected or failed to understand Majnun, while the supposedly hostile natural world becomes legible, protective, and intimate. A contemporary ecocritical reading may describe this as a decentering of the human social order, but linguistically the

mechanism is more precise: a conventional negative association is neutralized and replaced by a positive contextual function.

e. *Scale and totality*: *chivin*, *ajdar*, *sher*, *mo'r*

Ultrurur erkin chivin qoshing'a,
Evrulur erkin quyun boshing'a. (Navoi 1991: 45)
 A gnat may sit upon your brow,
 while the whirlwind circles around your head.

The Turkic *chivin* “gnat/mosquito” represents the smallest end of the poem’s animal scale. The line pairs a minute living creature with *quyun* “whirlwind,” a non-animal force of the desert. The juxtaposition is important: the environment surrounding Majnun is represented from the microscopic to the atmospheric. The insect is not semantically grand, but its inclusion broadens the range of living beings participating in the desert scene. In this sense, the lexeme contributes not through traditional symbolism but through scalar inclusiveness.

Ajdard kelib ul fazoda nole,
Sheri yala mo'ri xasta hole. (Navoi 1991: 56)
 A dragon comes lamenting in that expanse; the lion and the ant are
 alike in afflicted state.

The second example intensifies the scalar principle. Persian *ajdar* “dragon” and *mo'r* “ant” represent opposite poles of size and power, with *sher* “lion” between them. The literary dragon is mythic rather than zoologically empirical, yet it remains part of the poem’s animal-imagistic lexicon. By assigning a shared state of lament or affliction to creatures of radically different scale, the passage levels a hierarchy that would otherwise separate the terrifying, the powerful, and the negligible.

This leveling effect is semantically significant. The animal lexicon is used to represent totality: if dragon, lion, and ant all enter the same affective field, Majnun’s suffering has become a principle organizing the entire represented world. The claim should not be read as a literal ecological doctrine. It is a poetic universalization achieved through lexical extremes and shared predication.

f. *Predatory intensification*: qoplon, babr, sher, bars

Qoplon bila babru sheri xunrez,
Qon to 'kkali changlar qilib tez.
Babr olinga o 'ylakim saqatlar,
Tirnog 'ingdin tanida xatlar.
Bars otlamog 'ing malolatidin,
Bog 'lab ko 'zini xijolatidin. (Navoi 1991: 125)
 Leopard, tiger, and blood-shedding lion
 sharpen their claws for blood;
 the tiger falls before you as if struck,
 its body marked by claw-lines;
 the bars, ashamed before your advance,
 lowers its eyes in embarrassment.

This passage accumulates predatory lexemes across Turkic and Persian layers: *qoplon* is Turkic, *babr* and *sher* are Persian, while *bars* is an old literary animal term with early Turkic attestation and a more complex ultimate history. The enumeration produces lexical intensification. Unlike the earlier compassionate scene, the words initially reactivate the predators' literal semantic features: blood, claws, attack, and physical force.

Yet the continuation again destabilizes the expected hierarchy. The predators are rhetorically subordinated to Majnun's state and movement. Their animal strength is retained as part of the imagery, but its pragmatic direction changes. The effect is not simple domestication; rather, the poet uses the high-energy semantics of predatory vocabulary to magnify the exceptional status of the lover. The passage therefore illustrates how the same lexical field can support contrasting functions in different contexts: empathy in one scene, violent intensity and rhetorical submission in another.

g. *Animal names in the zodiac*: sher, aqrab, qo'chqor

Ham sher tutub yo 'lida go 'sha,
Ham xusha bo 'lub otig 'a tusha,
Jon sanj o 'lub izidin Tarozu,
Aqrab topib anda no 'sh doru.

Yoy go 'sha tutub qoshi xamidin,
Qo 'chqor o 'lub o 'chku maqdamidin. (Navoi 1991: 65)
 Leo takes its place along his path;
 Virgo becomes a spread beneath his step;
 Libra follows, weighing out the soul;
 Scorpio finds there a sweet remedy;
 Sagittarius takes a corner from the curve of his brow;
 and the Ram is formed before his advancing step.

This passage requires a distinction between zoological and astronomical reference. *Sher* “lion” and *aqrab* “scorpion” are ordinary animal lexemes in other contexts, but here they name or evoke zodiacal signs. *Qo 'chqor* “ram” likewise shifts from an animal referent to a cosmological one. The process can be described as domain resemanticization: the lexical form retains the animal image that motivates the constellation or sign, but the immediate referent belongs to the celestial system.

The Arabic *aqrab* is particularly revealing. Its ordinary lexical semantics include the dangerous, poisonous scorpion. In the line *Aqrab topib anda no 'sh doru*, however, the negative association is inverted through *no 'sh doru* “sweet/healing medicine.” Poison and remedy are brought into deliberate semantic tension. The result is a double transformation: zoological meaning has already been transferred to a zodiacal sign, and the culturally negative feature of the animal is then rhetorically reversed within the celestial image.

The cosmological passage demonstrates why a purely zoological inventory would be insufficient. Animal lexemes in classical poetry can function across ontological domains: earthly fauna, mythic creatures, and celestial signs. Their semantic analysis must therefore distinguish lexical form, conventional cultural association, and local textual referent.

h. It “dog”: *pejoration, humility, and axiological reversal*

Munchaki topib sen itga ulfat,
It birla malak aro ne nisbat?
Har uydaki bo 'lsa itga manzil,
Bo 'lmas malak ul uy ichra nozil. (Navoi 1991: 136)

You have become so intimate with the dog
 what relation can there be between dog and angel?
 In whatever house a dog has its dwelling,
 an angel does not descend into that house.

The Turkic it “dog” is one of the most culturally loaded zoolexemes in the poem. In this passage it is placed in explicit opposition to *malak* “angel.” The contrast is axiological: dog is positioned as low, impure, or socially contemptible, whereas the angel represents purity and divine elevation. The rhetorical question makes the hierarchy overt rather than merely implied.

*Ne tong, agar it xirom qilsa,
 To 'da kul aro maqom qilsa?
 Har itgaki yetsa bir jarohat,
 Kuldin etishur tanig'a rohat.
 Yo 'q, yo 'qki, emastur itlik anda,
 Itlik manga xatm erur jahonda.
 It men, men, ulusqa or men, men,
 Boshdin ayog'i figor men, men!* (Navoi 1991: 140)
 What wonder if a dog moves about
 and makes its place upon a heap of ash?
 When a dog receives a wound,
 ash may bring comfort to its body.
 No, no – there is no doghood in that one;
 doghood in this world is sealed in me.
 I am the dog, I – the shame before the people, I;
 from head to foot I am wounded, I.

The later passage reverses the social insult by self-appropriation. Majnun does not simply deny the degrading comparison; he intensifies it: It men, men “I am the dog, I.” Repetition foregrounds the self-predication and transforms a pejorative label into a vocabulary of humility, abjection, and spiritual self-effacement. In Sufi-inflected literary culture, such self-lowering can participate in the rhetoric of the annihilation of ego, although the immediate linguistic fact is simpler and demonstrable: the negative social evaluation of it is refunctionalized by the speaker. This example is especially important for semantic theory because it shows that lexical connotation is neither fixed nor context-free.

A pejorative animal term can be quoted, appropriated, and redirected. Its negative social force remains perceptible – otherwise the passage would lose its tension – but the speaker makes that force serve a different value system. The zoolexeme thus becomes a site of conflict between public evaluation and the lover's self-definition.

6. DISCUSSION

The analyses above reveal four recurrent semantic processes. The first is personification: animals are assigned predicates such as weeping, asking, sharing pain, or feeling shame. The second is affective alignment: animals do not merely display human behavior but are organized as participants in Majnun's emotional field. The third is semantic inversion: features conventionally associated with danger or degradation are reversed, as when the wolf's eye becomes a lamp, Scorpio yields a remedy, or the dog becomes a chosen figure of self-humbling. The fourth is domain resemanticization, most visible in the zodiacal passage, where ordinary animal names function as celestial signs.

These processes are not distributed according to etymological origin in a deterministic way. Turkic, Persian, and Arabic items can all undergo metaphorization, personification, or symbolic extension. The historical layer instead contributes to the resources available to the poet. Borrowing creates lexical plurality; plurality enables synonymic selection and register differentiation; context then assigns a specific function. This relationship may be represented as a sequence: lexical history → available synonymic/associative repertoire → contextual selection → poetic-semantic function.

The Turkic layer is especially strong in basic fauna and in emotionally direct vocabulary. *Bo'ri*, *qoplon*, *it*, *kiyik*, and *chivin* are lexemes closely tied to concrete animal categories. Persian vocabulary often overlaps with these categories but also carries the prestige and intertextual associations of Persianate poetic culture. *Sher* and *ohu* are the clearest examples of such overlap. Arabic items in the analyzed passages are fewer but often semantically specialized, especially in learned or scriptural

registers: *hudhud* connects with a scriptural-messenger tradition, *aqrab* enters astronomical terminology, and *vahsh* functions as a generalized learned category.

Synonymic coexistence deserves particular attention. In historical contact languages, a borrowed synonym does not necessarily eliminate a native word. Instead, both may survive and develop stylistic niches. Navoi's use of *arslon/sher* and *kiyik/ohu* should therefore be approached not as redundant duplication but as an expanded lexical choice-set. The choice may be influenced by meter, sound pattern, collocation, genre tradition, intertextual expectation, or the desired degree of poetic elevation. A full corpus-based study of all occurrences across the *Khamasa* would be required to quantify these distributions, but the selected examples already demonstrate the functional value of etymological layering.

The animal vocabulary also reorganizes the human/non-human boundary within the poem. When Majnun leaves society, communicative and affective predicates migrate toward animals and birds. The desert becomes a semiotic environment in which wolves can illuminate, gazelles can share grief, birds can inquire, and even tiny insects can participate in the hero's surrounding world. This does not mean that animal and human categories literally collapse. Rather, the poem uses grammatical predication and figurative transfer to make those categories relationally permeable.

From a modern ecocritical perspective, the pattern may be read as a challenge to a strictly anthropocentric hierarchy, because the non-human world becomes ethically and emotionally responsive while human society is frequently represented as alienating. Yet the historical-poetic framework remains crucial. The unity presented in the text is closely connected with the classical rhetoric of love, mystical universalization, and the transformation of conventional oppositions. The strongest scholarly formulation is therefore not that Navoi anticipates modern environmental theory, but that his poetic language provides a sophisticated premodern model in which human emotion is represented through an animate, responsive, and symbolically interconnected cosmos.

The study also suggests a methodological lesson for historical lexicology. Etymology becomes analytically meaningful when it is connected with textual function. Merely listing a word as Turkic, Persian, or Arabic does not explain its role in the poem. Conversely, a purely symbolic reading may overlook the lexical choices through which symbolism is constructed. Combining historical-etymological and semantic-functional analysis makes it possible to see both the diachronic source of the vocabulary and its synchronic poetic activation in a specific text.

7. CONCLUSION

The zoolexicon of Alisher Navoi's *Layli and Majnun* is a historically layered and semantically dynamic subsystem of the poem's language. The selected material confirms the coexistence of a strong inherited Turkic core with Persian/Persian-mediated and Arabic learned vocabulary. Turkic forms such as *bo'ri*, *qoplon*, *kiyik*, *it*, and *qo'chqor* stand beside Persian items such as *ohu*, *sher*, *ajdar*, *babr*, and *mo'r* and Arabic items such as *hudhud*, *aqrab*, and *vahsh*. This multilingual composition reflects the broader historical structure of the Chagatai literary lexicon.

The functional analysis demonstrates that lexical origin does not predetermine contextual meaning. Across all three layers, zoolexemes may remain literal, become personified, acquire emotional or evaluative force, undergo metaphorical inversion, or shift into a cosmological domain. The most characteristic transformations include predators becoming empathetic companions, the gazelle becoming a sharer of grief, the wolf's eye becoming a lamp, Scorpio becoming associated with remedy, and the dog moving from social degradation to voluntary self-identification and humility.

A particularly important finding is the role of etymological doublets and near-synonyms. The coexistence of *arslon/sher* and *kiyik/ohu* shows how contact-induced lexical enrichment provides Navoi with a wider range of stylistic and symbolic choices. Historical stratification is therefore not merely evidence of borrowing; it is part of the poem's expressive infrastructure.

Finally, the article argues for an integrated approach to classical Turkic texts. Historical lexicology identifies the layered origins of the vocabulary, while contextual semantics and stylistics show how those lexical resources are activated in discourse. Applied together, these methods reveal that Navoi's animal vocabulary is neither a simple inventory of fauna nor a set of decorative symbols. It is a flexible linguistic system through which the poem constructs emotional solidarity, hierarchy and its reversal, cosmic correspondence, and the changing relation between Majnun and the world around him. Future research can extend this analysis through a complete digital concordance of the *Khamsa*, frequency-based comparison of Turkic and borrowed zoolexemes, and systematic study of their collocations across Navoi's poetic corpus.

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OZODBEK IMOMALI O'G'LI DANABEKOV

INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER,

ALISHER NAVOI TASHKENT STATE UNIVERSITY
OF UZBEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, UZBEKISTAN.

E-MAIL: <DANABEKOV OZODBEK98@GMAIL.COM>

ORCID: 0009-0005-1682-9512