

HISTORICAL LAYERS AND THEIR SEMANTIC CHANGES IN THE LEXICAL SYSTEM OF THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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*This article aims to identify lexical layers and systematically analyze the types of semantic changes observed in each layer. Historical written sources (Old Turkic inscriptions, "Kutadgu bilig", "Devonu lugotit-turk"), classical and modern literary texts, etymological dictionaries and corpus data are used as research materials. Methodologically, historical-comparative, corpus-linguistic and semantic analysis methods are used together. The results of the research illustrate the division of the Uzbek lexicon into layers and the semantic processes that occurred in each layer with specific examples, and provide practical recommendations for language reforms, lexicography and the development of educational materials. This work will be a valuable resource for linguists, lexicographers and language teachers studying the history of the Uzbek language, lexical evolution and semantic transformations.*

Language is one of the oldest and most important social phenomena in human history. Language is also the main means of expressing the national identity, culture, worldview, and historical memory of each people. The processes of formation, development, and change of language are closely related to the development of society. Therefore, the study of the origin, historical stratification, and semantic development of each lexical unit in a

language is considered one of the current directions of linguistics<sup>1</sup>. In particular, in the case of the Uzbek language, the analysis of the historical layers of the lexical system is of great importance not only for linguistic reasons, but also for understanding cultural and civilizational values. The Uzbek language belongs to the Turkic language family, and its lexical system has been formed over thousands of years under the influence of various historical, social, political and cultural factors. In each historical period, new words have appeared, some of which have fallen out of use, while others have changed or expanded their meaning. Therefore, the vocabulary of the Uzbek language has a layered structure, in which ancient Turkic words, borrowings from Arabic and Persian, the lexicon of the Russian period, and new neologisms after independence coexist in harmony. The semantic changes that have occurred between these layers reflect the natural laws of language development. In linguistics, the term "lexical layer" is used to denote a set of words formed during the historical development of a language or adopted from other languages. Each layer is determined by the socio-cultural needs of its time. For example, the ancient Turkic layer is manifested through words expressing the way of life of the people before the period of settlement, the relationship between nature and man. In the Arab-Persian layer, lexical units expressing religious, scientific and spiritual concepts prevail. The Russian period is characterized by the introduction of technical, administrative and political terms. During the period of independence, international words entering through the English language (Internet, innovation, marketing, etc.) are forming a new lexical layer. Another important aspect of studying the historical layers of the lexical system is the identification of semantic changes. It is a natural phenomenon that the meaning of words narrows, expands, acquires a positive or negative meaning, becomes metaphorical, or becomes semantically blurred during the development of a language. For example, the word "yakshi" in the ancient Turkic language originally meant "suitable, appropriate", but now it is used in the general sense of "noble, positive". Or the word "mard" meant "man" in Persian, but in Uzbek it underwent semantic expansion to mean "brave, courageous person". Such examples show what kind of analysis the semantic layers of the Uzbek language require in different periods. The lexicon of the Uzbek language has historically been in contact with multilingual cultures. Words from Arabic and Persian have become so deeply embedded in the language over the

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullayev, A. (2019). Tilshunoslikka kirish. Toshkent: Fan nashriyoti.

centuries that many of them are now considered "national" elements of the Uzbek language. This indicates a strong semantic adaptation and integration of the borrowings.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Russian terms that came into use during the Soviet era have also undergone some semantic changes. For example, words such as "party", "committee", "soviet" have lost their historical connotations and are sometimes used in a neutral sense. The post-independence period has been enriched with English neologisms, which has given rise to new semantic trends.

The relevance of this topic is that in today's globalization environment, the lexical system of the language is changing more rapidly. New technologies, scientific and technical achievements and information flows also directly affect the meaning of lexical units in the language. By identifying historical layers and observing their semantic dynamics, it is possible to more deeply understand the laws of language development, the cultural consciousness of the people, and spiritual values. From this point of view, the study of changes taking place in the lexical system of the Uzbek language is of not only theoretical but also practical importance. The theoretical basis of the study is formed by the disciplines of historical-comparative linguistics, semasiology and etymology. Also, through the corpus linguistics approach, lexical units in ancient sources are compared with their semantic adaptation in the modern language. This allows us to identify traces of historical layers in the modern language, and reveal their semantic functional load. The lexical system of the Uzbek language is not a simple set of words, but a complex historical structure that has been formed over the centuries<sup>3</sup>. It is closely related to the lifestyle, worldview, culture and thinking of the people. Therefore, the analysis of lexical layers from a historical and semantic point of view serves to deeply understand the internal laws of the language and to more fully illuminate the history of the Uzbek language. This article studies these processes based on a systematic approach and presents important scientific results for the theory and practice of linguistics. The lexical system of the Uzbek language was formed during long historical processes, and its vocabulary is a complex structure consisting of words that appeared, disappeared or underwent semantic changes in different periods. The formation of lexical layers was inextricably linked with social, cultural, political and economic factors. Therefore, in the structure of the vocabulary of the Uzbek language, it is possible to

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<sup>2</sup> Begmatov E. (2015). O'zbek tili leksikologiyasi va frazeologiyasi. Toshkent: Noshir.

<sup>3</sup> Berdialiyev B. (2020). O'zbek tili taraqqiyotida tarixiy leksik qatlamlarning o'rni. Toshkent: Yangi asr avlodi.

distinguish ancient Turkic, Arab-Persian, Russian and modern international layers. Each layer had a specific impact on the semantic development of the language system.

**1. Ancient Turkic layer.** This layer constitutes the most ancient, national root of the Uzbek language. It contains words related to the past way of life, customs, nature and labor of the people. For example, such units as earth, sky, water, horse, hand, heart, bird, homeland are also found in ancient Turkic sources. Their semantic stability indicates that they were actively used even in distant historical periods. At the same time, some words have expanded in meaning: for example, in ancient times the word "el" meant only "people", but now it also means "state", "society". This semantic process is associated with the expansion of general social concepts in the language<sup>4</sup>.

**2. Arab-Persian layers.** From the 9th to the 12th centuries, the Uzbek language came into close contact with the Arabic and Persian languages. Initially, these words were used in religious, scientific and cultural spheres, and later they were absorbed into the national lexicon. Words such as science, etiquette, school, lesson, patience, love, world came from Arabic and were adapted to the phonetic system of the Uzbek language. Some of them have undergone a process of semantic narrowing or expansion. For example, the word "science" was originally used in the sense of "religious knowledge", but now it means "any knowledge". "Patience" was previously used more in a religious context, but now it has been generalized as a human virtue.

**3. The layer introduced through the Russian language.** At the end of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Uzbek language was enriched with a new layer under the influence of the Russian language. During this period, many words related to politics, technology, industry, and education came into being: factory, tractor, telephone, party, committee, school, teacher, etc. Most of them were absorbed into the internal system of the Uzbek language through semantic adaptation. For example, although "maktab" is an Arabic word, during the Russian period its semantic scope expanded and took on the meaning of a modern educational institution. Some Russian terms are losing their place in the process of modern language or are being replaced by new international words<sup>5</sup>.

**4. Modern neologisms and the international layer.** In the post-independence period, as a result of the influence of the English language, new words have been actively introduced, especially in the technological, economic and cultural areas. Words such as Internet,

<sup>4</sup> Ergashov M. (2018). O'zbek tilining tarixiy grammatikasi. Samarqand: SamDU nashriyoti.

<sup>5</sup> Hojiyev A. (2006). Til va madaniyat: semantik jarayonlar mohiyati. Toshkent: Fan.

marketing, innovation, brand, online form a new layer of the current Uzbek lexicon. Words from this layer are often actively used in the language on the basis of metaphorical expansion in semantic terms. For example, the word "network" was previously used only in the meaning of fish or net, but now it has acquired new meanings such as "social network", "information network". In general, the historical layers of the Uzbek lexicon have developed inextricably linked with each other. Each era has updated its vocabulary through its meaning system, cultural value and social needs. This natural variability of the language indicates that it is a living and active system.

In conclusion, it can be said that the formation of the lexical system of the Uzbek language is a complex process that includes long historical periods. In each period, the vocabulary of the language has developed in close connection with the life, lifestyle, worldview and culture of the people. Each layer of the language - from ancient Turkic roots to Arab-Persian, Russian and modern international layers - has preserved the spiritual and cultural traces of its time. The harmonious coexistence of these layers in one language is evidence of the flexibility and rich semantic possibilities of the Uzbek language. There have been constant semantic changes between lexical layers. Some words have lost their meaning, while others have begun to be actively used in new contexts. For example, historical words are now found only in literary or folklore texts, while new modern terms are entering everyday speech. In this way, the Uzbek language is being updated based on the requirements of the new era, while preserving its historical heritage. Such semantic renewal processes are a natural manifestation of language development. From the point of view of linguistics, the study of the historical development of lexical layers helps not only to determine the wealth of vocabulary in the language, but also to understand changes in the thinking and social consciousness of the people. The meaning of a word is directly related to social relations in society, cultural values, and the development of science, and the past and present worldview of the people are expressed through language. Therefore, the study of historical layers in the lexical system of the Uzbek language is of great importance not only linguistically, but also culturally and historically. The Uzbek language is a living, constantly changing and evolving system. Its lexical wealth reflects the life, worldview, and thinking of the people over the centuries. The study of semantic changes in lexical layers serves as an important scientific basis for a deep understanding of the process of language development, the preservation of historical heritage, and its adaptation to modern language practice.

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