

Structural Components of Similes in Navoi's "Farhod Va Shirin" And Their Distinctive Functions

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Abstract: This study examines the structural components and distinctive functions of similes in Alisher Navoi's epic poem Farhod va Shirin. Drawing on linguo-cultural and cognitive linguistic frameworks, the research analyzes the four-component model of simile – subject, standard, basis, and formal marker – and its semantic, grammatical, and artistic roles. The findings demonstrate that similes in the poem serve as multilayered linguo-cognitive units reflecting Navoi's mastery of Turkic literary language and his capacity to encode cultural meaning through figurative comparison.

Keywords: Simile, structural components, Farhod va Shirin, Alisher Navoi, linguo-cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics, figurative language, Uzbek literary language, semantic analysis, Old Uzbek poetry.

Introduction: Language constitutes one of the most significant and systematic forms of cultural experience produced by humanity, embodying the historical memory, social consciousness, and value systems of a given society. It functions not merely as a communicative instrument but as a mechanism for encoding, preserving, and transmitting cultural information across generations, thereby shaping the cognitive orientation, worldview, and evaluative criteria of a particular ethnos (Humboldt, 1836; Sapir, 1921; Whorf, 1956; Weisgerber, 1953). Accordingly, language is recognized not only as a medium of communication but as a principal determinant of a community's cultural and identity-forming essence.

Within contemporary anthropocentric linguistics, the disciplines of linguo-cultural studies and cognitive linguistics have emerged from the theoretical foundations established by scholars such as V. Humboldt, L. Weisgerber, E. Sapir, and B. Whorf concerning the relationship between language and

thought. From a logical standpoint, simile manifests as one of the most fundamental cognitive operations of human thinking, grounded in the identification of shared features between different objects and phenomena and the discovery of relations of resemblance among them. As noted by A. Potebnya, "the process of cognition is itself the process of comparison" – a conceptual position regarded as a key methodological principle in both linguistics and cognitive theory (Potebnya, 1905).

Simile, as a complex semantic-constructive unit with a distinctive internal structure, is formed through the interaction of logical components – subject, standard, basis – and the formal markers connecting them. As such, it is recognized not merely as a device of artistic representation but as a multilayered linguo-cognitive phenomenon that vividly demonstrates the interrelation of thought and language. The present study investigates the structural components and distinctive functions of similes as employed in Alisher Navoi's epic poem Farhod va Shirin, one of the

masterpieces of classical Uzbek literature.

METHOD

Scholars including A. Shomaqsudov and R. Qo'ng'urov have established that simile in Uzbek literary language consists of four components, illustrated by the following example:

Bog'lardagi qip-qizil lola

Bo'lub go'yo yoqut piyola

In this passage: (1) the simile subject (that which is compared) is lola (tulip); (2) the simile standard (that to which it is compared) is piyola (cup); (3) the basis of comparison is yoqut (ruby); and (4) the formal marker of simile is go'yo (as if).

A more complex illustration is drawn from Farhod va Shirin:

Chu may birla qizishti boshi oning, Surohiydek oqib qon yoshi oning.

Here: (1) the simile subject is qon yoshi (tears of blood), expressing the intensity of emotional suffering; (2) the simile standard is surohiy (a wine vessel, connoting natural flow); (3) the basis is oqib (flowing), which carries both kinetic and emotional semantic weight; and (4) the formal marker is the suffix -dek.

This four-component structural model reveals the analytic nature of simile as a construction that unites semantic precision, grammatical coherence, and figurative expressiveness within a single linguistic unit (Ogoltsev, 1978). V. Barton similarly emphasized that simile generates new knowledge as a fourth cognitive outcome, a view that aligns simile with broader epistemological processes in which the unfamiliar is understood through the familiar (Barton, cited in Ogoltsev, 1978).

The structural diversity of simile in Uzbek is considerable. The following types may be identified:

1. Simile phrases (o'xshatish oborotlari) — widely used forms that, despite their expanded structure, do not constitute subordinate clauses due to the absence of a predicate-subject pair.
2. Simile clauses (o'xshatish ergash gaplar) — relatively complete structures containing both subject and predicate.
3. Forms expressed through the ablative case suffix.

4. Forms expressed through adjectives (o'xshash, teng), postpositions (kabi, singari, qadar), conjunctions (go'yo, go'yoki), pronouns (o'zi), and adverbs (aynan).

5. Appositive-explicative similes expressed through explicatory relations.

6. Expanded simile forms, in which multiple comparisons are nested within a single sentence, successively linking pairs of objects.

This typological breadth demonstrates that simile possesses virtually unlimited expressive potential within the Uzbek linguistic system.

Similes in Farhod va Shirin: Semantic Classification

N. Umarova, one of the leading scholars of Uzbek Navoistudies, has conducted an in-depth linguistic analysis of the role of the category of comparison in Farhod va Shirin, classifying similes related to human beings into the following semantic groups:

1. Similes related to human body parts:

Quloqda durri nobi gavhari ham, Qamar davrida Zuhra, Mushtari ham. ("The precious pearls and gems on her ears resemble Venus and Jupiter orbiting the moon".)

2. Similes related to human external appearance:

Kumushdek rangi nasrinfomi oning, Kumushdin g'unchadek andomi oning. ("Her complexion is silver like the narcissus blossom; her figure resembles a bud fashioned from silver".)

3. Similes related to human speech:

Labi la'lini gavharrosh qildi, Bu yanglig' nukta durrin fosh qildi.

("Her ruby lips scattered pearls as she spoke, and in this way she revealed the pearl of her words".)

4. Similes related to human emotional states:

Bu yanglig' qotiloso kelsa ko'zga, Yo'q ish oh urmoqu o'lmoqdin o'zga.

("When such a deadly beauty appears before one's eyes, there is nothing left to do but sigh and die".)

According to Umarova's analysis, similes pertaining to external human appearance constitute the largest semantic group within the poem, followed by those referencing body parts. This distribution reflects both the aesthetic priorities of classical Eastern poetry and Navoi's characteristic method of constructing psychologically and visually vivid character portraits

(Umarova, 2019).

Simile as an Ideological and Structural Device in Farhod va Shirin

Navoi employs simile not merely as a decorative stylistic figure but as a principal ideological and structural device. The second chapter of the poem demonstrates this function particularly clearly. The poet draws similes between fate (qazo) and Farhod; between the sky and the Behistun mountain; between reason and the sage Mulkoro or Socrates; between night and Khusrav's legendary horse Shabdez; between doom and Farhod's companion Shapur; and between time and Khusrav's musician Nigiso. Through these correspondences, Navoi organically connects the preface to the narrative content of the entire poem, transforming the simile into a device of structural integration.

This demonstrates that Navoi's extraordinary command of both Turkic and Persian literary traditions enabled him to deploy simile as a multilevel instrument – simultaneously serving aesthetic, semantic, cognitive, and architectonic functions. As Navoi himself affirmed in *Lisonut-tayr*:

She'r har sinfini qildim ibtido, Turk alfozi bila topdi ado.

His commitment to the Turkic language and his proof of its expressive capacity, articulated theoretically in *Muhokamatul-lug'atayn*, established the scientific principles of comparative linguistics for the first time in the Turkic world.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of similes in *Farhod va Shirin* yields the following principal findings:

The four-component model (subject, standard, basis, formal marker) consistently structures simile formation throughout the poem and functions as an instrument of semantic precision, emotional amplification, and cognitive enrichment. Structurally, similes in the poem range from simple phrasal forms to complex expanded constructions involving nested comparisons. Semantically, the dominant group comprises similes related to human external appearance, reflecting the poem's concern with the embodied and emotional dimensions of its characters. Functionally, simile serves not only as a figurative device but as a key mechanism of ideological articulation, chapter-level structural

organization, and cultural encoding.

The theoretical models of V.Ogoltsev and V.Barton are confirmed and elaborated by the textual evidence: simile in *Farhod va Shirin* functions as both a linguistic construction and a cognitive act, generating new layers of meaning by mapping the unfamiliar onto the culturally and perceptually familiar.

CONCLUSION

The similes in Alisher Navoi's *Farhod va Shirin* represent a complex, multilayered linguo-cognitive phenomenon that integrates structural, semantic, aesthetic, and ideological dimensions. The consistent application of a four-component structural model, combined with extensive semantic diversity and functional versatility, demonstrates that simile in classical Uzbek literary language is far more than a decorative trope. It is a fundamental mechanism through which the poet encodes cultural values, constructs character psychology, and organizes the architecture of the epic. Navoi's mastery of the Turkic language – demonstrated both in creative practice and in theoretical works such as *Muhokamatul-lug'atayn* – renders *Farhod va Shirin* an indispensable corpus for the study of Uzbek linguo-cultural and cognitive poetics. Further interdisciplinary research combining cognitive linguistics, linguo-cultural studies, and classical Uzbek literary scholarship is warranted.

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