# PHONETIC AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ARABIC NAMES

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***Abstract:*** *This article examines the process of phonetic and semantic adaptation of Arabic-origin names in the Uzbek language. It highlights how names borrowed from Arabic were assimilated under the influence of religious, historical, and cultural factors, focusing on phonetic transformations, semantic shifts, connotative meanings, and their role within the Uzbek onomastic system. Comparative analyses are provided between names found in the Qur’an, Hadiths, and classical sources with their modern Uzbek usage.*

***Keywords:*** *anthroponymy, Arabic names, phonetic adaptation, semantic shift, onomastics, Qur’an, Hadith, linguistic culture*

The spread of Islam in Central Asia contributed to the introduction and consolidation of many Arabic-origin names into the Uzbek anthroponymic system. A name was not merely a means of identifying a person, but also a religious and spiritual symbol. Prominent scholars such as Abu Rayhan Beruni, Mahmud Kashgari, and Alisher Navoi frequently used Arabic names in their works, which illustrates their deep integration into cultural and intellectual traditions.

Arabic names in Uzbek onomastics have been closely linked to religious values since ancient times. Names of prophets mentioned in the Qur’an—Ibrahim, Ismail, Yusuf, Musa, Isa, Muhammad—became some of the most popular names among Uzbeks. In Hadith literature, the matter of giving good names is also emphasized. For instance, Imam al-Bukhari narrates a Hadith: “Give your children good names, for they will be called by them on the Day of Judgment.” This religious instruction strongly influenced parents’ choices, leading them to prefer names with moral and spiritual significance.

From a phonetic perspective, Arabic names underwent several transformations as they were adapted into Uzbek:

The Arabic ‘ayn (ع) sound is often dropped or softened in Uzbek: Sa‘id → Said, Ma‘ruf → Maruf.

The qāf (ق) may shift between [q] and [k]: Qodir → Kodir.

The emphatic ḥāʾ (ح) is usually replaced with a lighter [h] or [x]: Husayn → Usayn, Halim → Olim.

These changes result from the natural adaptation of foreign sounds to Uzbek phonological norms. The linguist A. Nurmonov refers to this as “phonetic adaptation in accordance with internal linguistic laws.”

Arabic names also vary regionally in pronunciation. In the Fergana Valley, Fatima is often realized as Patima; in Khorezm, as Potima. In Bukhara, Ismoil may appear as Smayil, and Yusuf as Yusup. Such dialectal variation reflects the assimilation of Arabic names into the everyday speech of local communities.

Semantically, Arabic names often carry meanings related to virtue, beauty, power, faith, and piety:

Sodiq – truthful, sincere;

Karim – noble, generous;

Jamil – beautiful;

Nuriddin – light of religion;

Zaynab – ornament of the father.

These meanings align with Uzbek moral and spiritual values, which explains their continued popularity.

Many Arabic names also contain explicit religious symbolism. Examples include Abdulloh (“servant of Allah”), Abdurahmon (“servant of the Merciful”), and Abduqodir (“servant of the Powerful”). The prefix “Abd” in combination with divine attributes demonstrates the theolinguistic character of Arabic anthroponyms.

Historical sources show that in the 9th–10th centuries in Mawarannahr, names with the components Abu, Ibn, and Abd were widespread. Famous scholars such as Abu Nasr Farabi, Abu Rayhan Beruni, and Ibn Sina carried names with such Arabic structures, illustrating the connection between Arabic anthroponyms and scholarly as well as religious traditions.

Arabic-origin names continue to dominate in contemporary Uzbekistan. According to the Ministry of Justice (2023), the most common newborn names were Muhammad, Abdurahmon, Yusuf, Zaynab, Maryam, all of Arabic origin. This proves the enduring semantic appeal and religious motivation behind such naming practices.

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Arabic names also hold symbolic significance in oral literature. In Uzbek folklore and classical poetry, we find Yusuf and Zulaikha, Layli and Majnun, and the names of Hasan and Husayn. Here, names serve not only as identifiers but also as cultural and spiritual symbols.

The widespread use of Arabic names reflects the religious devotion and cultural ties of the Uzbek people. Through these names, Qur’anic and Hadith-based values have been transmitted across generations, becoming a vital part of the nation’s

identity. Studying Arabic names is therefore crucial for linguistic, cultural, and religious scholarship.

In conclusion, Arabic names have been fully assimilated into the Uzbek language both phonetically and semantically. Their phonetic transformation demonstrates natural processes of adaptation, while their semantic features reflect the preservation of religious and moral values. Arabic anthroponyms embody the Uzbek people's spiritual worldview, historical memory, and linguistic-cultural heritage.

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