

ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL AND LEXICAL-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF
ONOMASTIC UNITS IN LOVE EPICS**Abstract**

This article categorizes the onomastic units used in love epics into various groups based on their semantic features: nature, cosmic objects, fauna and flora, work tools, body parts, and so forth. In the epics, names not only reflect an individual's identity but also reveal their character, social status, and emotional state. Onomastic units are analyzed based on referential, pragmatic, and intralinguistic semantic components. In love epics, names perform nominative, communicative, aesthetic, and expressive functions. These names also reflect the ethnopsychology, cultural-historical context, and national lexicon of the people. Investigating onomastic units allows for a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people.

Keywords: *onomastic units, lexicon, semantics, structure, epic, function*

Like all linguistic units, onomastic units undergo a fascinating process of functionalization. The content of onomastic units is characterized by a variety of functional features. Functional onomastic units influence human cognition. Their primary function is to convey information about names, territories, traditions, and people. Onomastic units possess informative, communicative, expressive, and methodological functions. These functions evolve from "form to function." Additionally, it is possible to include the function of expressing attitudes toward onomastic units. In this context, the semantic relevance of onomastic units in love epics becomes apparent. Onomastic units are functionalized in lexical, morphological, and syntactic forms.

The creative skill of epic poets manifests itself in their ability to activate and utilize one of the potential meanings inherent in words and names, aligning them with artistic objectives and stylistic approaches. This process organizes the relationship between artistic reality and life.

In the language of love epics, onomastic names can be studied in two directions: 1) as structural elements of the text, and 2) as an integrated semantic system. The first approach is related to speech features, while the second involves the semantic regularities of the epic text.

In epic texts, the functions of onomastic units are distinguished by their poetic-aesthetic, phatic-contact, and emotive aspects. Due to these characteristics, linguistics addresses these functions.

One of the less-explored issues in love epics is the poetic-stylistic features of onomastic units. A. Qurbanov refers to this as the study of "primarily the names given to artistic works, the characters within them, and the places described in these works, as well as their stylistic characteristics, the role of onomastic units in enhancing the ideological and artistic impact of the work, the comic nature of proper names in artistic literature, ethnic names, the figurative nature of onomastic units, the creation of proper names in literary works, the syntactic and semantic features of proper names in a literary work, the analysis of any writer's individual onomastics, and other related issues" [5, p.496].

To determine the style, it is essential to understand the ideological-political significance of the words used in the speech of characters involved in the epics.

The Poetic Potential of Personal Names in Love Epics

The poetic potential of personal names in love epics is notably broad. The distinguished onomastic scholar Aydın Paşayev writes that "up to now, much has been written about the stylistic features of personal names in literary works. In recent years, the number of studies has increased significantly, focusing particularly on the stylistic characteristics of anthroponyms with diminutive, affectionate, or invented meanings used in folklore and literary works. Some studies have also addressed the phonetic-stylistic features of poetic anthroponyms. These investigations, which explore character names from various perspectives, are primarily labeled as 'stylistic features of personal names'" [8, p. 5].

According to T. Hajiyeve, "the concept expressed by an onomastic name may diverge from its real, nominative meaning in the language and can be interpreted according to the individual's cognitive perspective. In other words, the individual determines the meaning of the name" [1, p. 45].

Q. Kazimov states: "Words and names, as the fundamental elements and subjects of oral folk literature, hold a special place within the system of linguistic signs. The manifestation of both scientific and artistic thought begins with these units. Words, names, and naming practices, characterized by their functional breadth and universality, primarily serve informative and generalizing functions. Simultaneously, these linguistic units possess the capacity to express the speaker's and listener's attitudes and emotions" [4, p. 61].

In general, names in literary works, which aim to depict the biography and characterization of a type, serve a stylistic purpose. For instance, names like Anket Ankeyov, Mindil Mindilov, Yalan Palanov, Sifir Sifirov, and Qara Qışqırıqov illustrate this concept [7, pp. 24-25].

R. Hasanov notes that among onomastic units, personal names and anthroponyms occupy a particularly significant place. In literary works, these names assume poetic and stylistic functions through the writer's talent and artistic mastery, which skillfully utilizes the power

and magic of artistic language. Anthroponyms are employed in accordance with specific literary objectives, serving as stylistic devices within texts. Since personal names belong to lexical categories, they exhibit diverse stylistic possibilities [3, pp. 31-33].

In love epics, anthroponyms are employed to vividly convey the ideas, ideals, and objectives of characters who display heroism, courage, invincibility, and valor in the pursuit of love. The lives and struggles of historically progressive figures and epic heroes are represented through anthroponyms within poetic texts.

The rhetorical question sentences that incorporate the names of mythological characters form a syntactic unit marked by question intonation, merging the conveyed thought with emotional emphasis to create a more impactful effect. Inspired by Azerbaijani epics, poets have utilized legendary anthroponyms to emphasize the exaltation of pure, noble, and sublime love.

In love epics, anthroponyms are also used as addresses, serving an essential stylistic function. Particularly in the poetic sections of epics, the repetition of the same intonation and meaning in this use case enhances grandeur and vividness, enriching the semantic content of the epic texts and creating a heightened sense of pathos. For instance, nicknames are employed within the language of love epics for specific stylistic purposes. These nicknames distinguish the hero's or type's characteristic traits, separating good from bad and positive from negative.

In general, the Azerbaijani language possesses a rich semantic system. All semantic phenomena present in the language are, in one way or another, reflected in anthroponyms. This implies that semantic capacity is characteristic not only of various lexical units but also of anthroponyms. As anthroponyms are inherently associated with human identity, they differ from ordinary words by uniting around a single meaning. Typically, they exhibit monosemy. Nevertheless, personal names also prominently display polysemy.

The linguistic characteristics of proper names, their lexical meanings, structural-semantic structures, functional variations, manifestation possibilities, stylistic-expressive nuances, and figurativeness are among the important issues studied within onomastics.

In Azerbaijani love epics, proper names are presented as lexical-semantic and stylistic units. Subsequent sections will discuss this in greater detail. In this context, it is essential to emphasize that "onomastic units pertain to reality and reflect it, not in an isolated way detached from the lexical-semantic system of the language, but in close connection with it, expressing meaning through the entire semantic system that constitutes the semantic structure of the language. They generalize and unify the social perception of that meaning" [2, p. 119].

The semantic power of a proper name intensifies and multiplies in the speech of epic heroes. It appears that the semantics of anthroponyms and toponyms in love epics should be considered as a historical-cultural and emotional-expressive category.

In some cases, onomastic names in love epics are used to generate subtextual meanings. Naturally, sub-

textual meanings primarily belong to folklore and literary works. In love epics, not only life, domestic, and love feelings are portrayed, but also hidden emotional thoughts emerge as subtextual meanings. The contrasts within the mood of subtextual onomastic images arise throughout the progression of events. For example, the remarks of onomastic characters within the text appear to restore them to the real flow of life (as seen in "Asli and Kerem" and "Tahir and Zohra"). The subtextual meanings associated with onomastic characters are inherently connected with the plot's movement and are organically linked to philosophical, moral, and social phenomena.

The anthroponyms present in love epics can be classified into several semantic groups:

1. Anthroponyms related to the environment.
2. Anthroponyms associated with cosmic objects and concepts.
3. Anthroponyms linked to fauna and flora.
4. Anthroponyms associated with tools and occupations.
5. Anthroponyms consisting of other specific names.
6. Anthroponyms related to body parts.
7. Anthroponyms derived from abstract and general vocabulary.

Similar to folktales, epics often omit the names of secondary characters. Instead, they are referred to by their profession, title, or position, such as farmer, wanderer, tailor, bandit, guardian, wrestler, gardener, shepherd, servant, maid, worker, chief, dervish, judge, governor, village elder, cleric, forester, shoemaker, pasha, khan, bey, king, executioner, archer, spearman, flag bearers, steward, commoner, centurion, hunter, merchant, messenger, etc.

These groups are determined based on semantic features. In general, the term "semantics" denotes the meaning conveyed. In semantics, personal names are studied as signs because a name is a linguistic unit and a sign. The semantic content of a name as a sign consists of three components:

1. **Referential meaning of the name:** This includes the referent and denotative elements of the sign. The denotative meaning is chosen from among the referential meaning variants and is determined by the specific type of text.
2. **Pragmatic meaning:** Also referred to as connotative meaning (including emotional, expressive, and stylistic meanings); it reflects the relationship between linguistic signs and the individuals who use them.
3. **Intra-linguistic meaning:** This involves the relationship between signs within the system of linguistic signs.

Thus, we have determined the sign content of personal names in love epics based on three components:

1. Name – the referential meaning of signs (semantics).
2. Name – the pragmatic meaning of signs (pragmatics).
3. Name – the intra-linguistic meaning of signs (syntax).

Furthermore, it can be argued that the selection of specific onomastics belonging to particular semantic

fields or spheres for love epics is undoubtedly influenced by the geographical environment, coordinates, and cultural-historical conditions of the era in which the epic was created. In the selection and usage of names as characters in love epics, we observe a maximal "exploitation" of semantic fields. This feature seems to be primarily associated with the ethno-psychology of the people and, subsequently, with the creative intuition of the epic poets. These onomastic forms serve as fundamental expressions and manifestations of the people's national identity. It is evident that the creators of these epics had a profound understanding of the material and spiritual culture of the Azerbaijani people, effectively using national and foreign lexical resources in onomastic creativity.

In love epics, the semantic features of anthroponyms (personal names) reflect the characters' nature, social status, fate, and even the main idea of the epic. These names not only signify the individual's identity but also reveal their role in the love story and their emotional world.

Love epics frequently exhibit frozen onomastic units within the phonetic, lexical, and morphological semantics of Azerbaijani. Examples include names such as Oghuz, Kipchak, Afshar, Bayat, and others.

The onomastic lexicon analyzed in love epics serves both artistic-expressive and stylistic functions. These functions are as follows:

1. **Nominative function:** This function conveys the names of realities specific to the Azerbaijani people. Such anthroponyms also appear in love epics, e.g., Aghabey, Amiraslan, Tutu, etc. In addition, traditional forms of address such as **khanim** (lady), **khatun** (noblewoman), **nene** (grandmother), **bacı** (sister), **mirza** (scribe), **aga** (sir), **bey** (gentleman), etc., are frequently encountered as components of anthroponyms.

2. **Communicative function:** In epic texts, "effective communication enables individuals or groups to achieve their goals and establish high-level relationships, impacting all aspects of organizational behavior. Communication involves the exchange of ideas, information, concepts, etc., through specific signs and material carriers, transferring content from one consciousness to another (individual and collective)" [6, p. 22].

3. **Aesthetic function:** Onomastic units, as in literary works, primarily serve communicative and aesthetic functions in the language of love epics. As researchers indicate, "the aesthetic function in literary texts represents the depiction of the author's thoughts

and conceptuality, deviating from ordinary linguistic norms and presenting the stylistic-semantic feature at a high level" [9, p. 17].

4. **Expressive function:** Onomastic units are used in syntactic constructions characterized by expressive syntax. This function intensifies both informativeness and expression.

All this once again proves that it is highly important to uncover the onomastic units hidden in the hearts of minstrels and folk poets, as expressed in their **qoşma**, **bayatı**, and epics, and to generalize and study the specific features of these units. Through the onomastic units used in folk creativity, it becomes possible to recall words that have faded from memory, become obsolete, or changed in form and structure. Additionally, it enables us to decipher the meanings of many still-mysterious proper names and to reveal numerous facts about the territories historically inhabited by the Azerbaijani people, as well as the political and economic relations they established with other nations and countries.

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