



# Linguistic Characteristics Of Manuscript Sources In Oriental Languages Devoted To The Study Of The History Of The Peoples Of Central Asia

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the linguistic features of historical sources created in Eastern languages, namely Arabic, Iranian, and Turkic languages. It explores the formation and transformation of their linguistic characteristics and distinctive styles in connection with historical processes. Furthermore, the paper discusses the mutual influence of Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages, as well as the interlingual interactions reflected in historical sources. The study highlights the importance of examining Eastern manuscripts from the perspectives of source studies and linguistics.

**Keywords:** Eastern languages, Turkic languages, Persian, Arabic language, historical sources, linguistic analysis, source analysis, comparative analysis.

**INTRODUCTION:** The linguistic analysis of manuscript sources in Eastern languages provides valuable insights into the historical development of languages and the cultural identity of the peoples of Central Asia. The use of Turkic, Arabic, and Persian in written heritage demonstrates the multilingual and multicultural character of the region. Each of these languages played a specific role in various spheres of intellectual and political life: Arabic served as the language of science and religion, Persian as the medium of literature and administration, and Turkic as the language of everyday communication and later as a tool of state expression.

From a linguistic perspective, the manuscripts reveal a high level of lexical borrowing and semantic adaptation among these languages. This process reflects the deep cultural interaction that occurred within Central Asia's intellectual centers such as Bukhara, Samarkand, and Herat. The morphological and syntactic structures of the texts also illustrate the gradual evolution of the Turkic written tradition under the influence of Arabic and Persian grammatical norms.

Stylistically, these works embody a fusion of artistic refinement and scholarly precision. Poetic and rhetorical devices, typical of classical Eastern literature, coexist with the formal language of historical and theological discourse. The authors' use of archaisms, honorifics, and metaphors demonstrates not only linguistic richness but also the cultural sophistication of the time. Furthermore, the study of these linguistic features allows modern scholars to reconstruct historical stages of language contact and development. It sheds light on the transformation of vocabulary, the emergence of hybrid expressions, and the adaptation of grammatical patterns that ultimately contributed to the formation of the Old Uzbek literary language and other regional linguistic forms.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Our knowledge of the history and culture of the peoples of Central Asia largely relies on manuscript works written in Eastern languages – Arabic, Persian, and Turkic. These sources not only narrate historical events but also provide valuable insights into the political, social, and cultural environment of their time.

In this article, a number of works composed in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic are analyzed in detail from both linguistic and source-critical perspectives. Particular attention is paid to their linguistic features, including lexical, morphological, and stylistic aspects, as well as to their historical and scholarly significance within the field of source studies. Such manuscripts represent an invaluable part of the intellectual heritage of the region, serving as primary sources for understanding the dynamics of intercultural exchange, the evolution of written traditions, and the development of linguistic diversity in medieval Central Asia.

#### SOURCES WRITTEN IN ARABIC

One of the most significant sources on Islamic history is "Tarikh al-Rusul wa-l-Muluk" by al-Ṭabari. This monumental chronicle, known as The History of al-Ṭabari, provides extensive information on the early centuries of Islamic civilization, the lives of the prophets, the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, as well as the history of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates. The work serves as an essential

source for studying the influence of Islam and Muslim culture on the peoples of Central Asia, particularly among the Uzbeks. The sections concerning Mawaraunnahr (Transoxiana) and Khurasan offer valuable data about the regions of Samarkand, Bukhara, Merv, and Balkh, including military conflicts, political and religious developments, and interactions between Arabs and the local population. These accounts form a solid foundation for Uzbek historians researching the ancient and medieval history of the region. The work is composed in classical Arabic (fuṣḥa) style and presents historical events in a strict chronological order. Al-Ṭabari employed the isnad (chain of transmission) method when citing narratives – a stylistic and methodological feature that became widespread in subsequent Islamic historiography. Later authors who wrote in Persian and Turkic, such as al-Biruni, al-Narshakhi, Ibn Sam'ani, Maḥmud al-Kashghari, and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, were also inspired by this narrative approach.

Another important Arabic work is Al-Baladhuri's "Futuḥ al-Buldan" ("The Conquests of the Lands"), which describes the expansion of Arab rule over various territories, including Transoxiana. The linguistic style of this work follows the traditional historiographical mode, focusing on military campaigns and political events.

Ibn Ḥawqal's "Ṣurat al-Ard" ("The Face of the Earth") is a geographical treatise that provides valuable information about the cities, routes, and economic life of Central Asia. The language of the text is characteristic of Arabic geographical literature – simple, descriptive, and precise.

Ibn Khaldun's "Al-Muqaddima" ("The Introduction") occupies an outstanding place in the theory of historiography and social sciences. The author presents profound reflections on the regularities of historical processes, the rise and decline of states, and the cyclical nature of civilization.

Another significant source is Ibn Arabshah's "Aja'ib al-Maqdur fi Tarikh Taymur" ("The Wonders of Destiny in the History of Timur"). The first volume narrates the childhood of Sahibqiran Amir Timur, his accession to the throne, the formation of his powerful empire, and his numerous military campaigns. The second volume deals with the events following Timur's death, including the wars for succession and political upheavals. Ibn Arabshah's evaluations of Amir Timur and the Timurid rulers differ considerably from those found in Persian and Turkic sources, making a comparative study of these texts crucial for forming objective scholarly conclusions about that historical period.

#### SOURCES WRITTEN IN PERSIAN

Firdawsī's "Shahnameh" (The Book of Kings). Firdawsī's "Shahnameh" is an epic poem that narrates the legendary and historical past of Iran and Turan, describing ancient heroes, dynasties, and moral values. Written in an elevated and poetic Persian style, the work serves as a crucial source for understanding the mythological and cultural history of Central Asia and Greater Iran. Its artistic richness and linguistic purity made it a cornerstone of Persian literature and a model for subsequent historiographical and poetic works across the region.

Bayhaqī's "Tarikh-i Mas'udi" (The History of Mas'ud). The "Tarikh-i Mas'udi" by Abu'l-Fazl Bayhaqi documents the political, military, and cultural events of the Ghaznavid dynasty, particularly during the reign of Sultan Mas'ud. Written in refined classical Persian prose, it provides an insightful and realistic portrayal of court life, administrative systems, and the socio-political dynamics of the 11th century. The work also contains valuable references to Central Asia, making it a key historical source for the study of early medieval Islamic governance.

Juvaynī's "Tarikh-i Jahan-gusha" (The History of the World Conqueror). Written by 'Ala al-Din Ata-Malik Juvayni, this monumental work recounts the Mongol invasions and their devastating impact on the Islamic world. It includes detailed accounts of Central Asian cities, peoples, and rulers during the Mongol expansion. The "Tarikh-i Jahan-gusha" combines historical accuracy with literary artistry, offering an invaluable contemporary perspective on the transformations in Eurasia during the 13th century.

Rashid al-Din's "Jami' al-Tawarikh" (Compendium of Chronicles). Rashid al-Din Hamadani's encyclopedic "Jami' al-Tawarikh" presents a universal history encompassing not only Islamic and Mongol history but also that of various Asian and European peoples. Written in a scholarly and chronological style, it represents one of the earliest attempts at a comprehensive world history. The work provides detailed information on Central Asian nations, their genealogies, and their roles in transcontinental political networks.

Hamdallah Qazvini's "Nuzhat al-Qulub" (Recreation of Hearts). This geographical and descriptive treatise offers extensive information about the cities, economies, and cultural life of Central Asia and the broader Islamic world. Qazvini's descriptive and illustrative prose reflects the author's deep interest in geography, economics, and natural phenomena. The "Nuzhat al-Qulub" remains a valuable source for understanding the historical geography and cultural topography of medieval Central Asia.

## SOURCES WRITTEN IN TURKIC

Mahmud al-Kashgari's "Diwan Lughat al-Turk" (Compendium of the Turkic Dialects). Mahmud al-Kashgari's lexicon is not merely a linguistic reference but also an ethnographic and cultural encyclopedia of the 11th-century Turkic world. The work records the vocabulary, proverbs, and poetic forms of various Turkic tribes, offering insights into their social customs, worldview, and linguistic diversity. It stands as an essential primary source for the study of Turkic philology and medieval Central Asian civilization.

Yusuf Khas Hajib's "Kutadgu Bilig" (The Wisdom of Royal Glory). This philosophical and didactic poem explores themes of governance, ethics, and social order. Yusuf Khas Hajib's refined Turkic prose combines moral instruction with political theory, emphasizing the ideals of justice, wisdom, and responsibility in leadership. The "Kutadgu Bilig" remains one of the foundational texts of Turkic political thought and an early reflection of state ideology in the Islamic East.

Alisher Navoi's "Tarikh al-Anbiya wa al-Hukama" (History of Prophets and Wise Men). In this work, Alisher Navoi presents concise biographies of prophets and philosophers, illustrating their moral virtues and intellectual legacies. Written in a richly expressive and elegant Turkic style, the work demonstrates Navoi's mastery of historical narrative and linguistic artistry. It bridges religious historiography and moral philosophy, highlighting the cultural synthesis of Turkic and Persian traditions.

Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur's "Baburnama" (The Memoirs of Babur). The "Baburnama" is an autobiographical chronicle that documents Babur's life, political campaigns, and observations on geography, flora, fauna, and society. Blending Turkic and Persian linguistic elements, it provides an intimate view of the founder of the Mughal Empire and serves as a primary source for the history of Central Asia and India in the early 16th century. Its literary beauty and historical precision make it a masterpiece of medieval Turkic prose.

Hafiz Tanish Bukhari's "Sharaf-nama-yi Shahi" (also known as "Abdullanama"). This historical chronicle records the reign of Abdullah Khan II of the Shaybanid dynasty. Written in an official and historiographical tone, it details the political, military, and diplomatic affairs of the Uzbek state in the 16th century. The work reflects the author's role as a court historian and provides a detailed account of statecraft, ideology, and dynastic politics in post-Timurid Central Asia.

## METHODS

Sources composed in Turkic languages exhibit extensive incorporation of Arabic and Persian vocabulary. Administrative terms such as “sultān”, “amir”, “wazir”, “mulk”, and numerous others were largely borrowed from Arabic. In many texts Arabic lexical items and set phrases – and in some instances entire conventional opening formulas (incipits) – appear in Arabic. This phenomenon is encountered not only in historical and literary works but also frequently in official documents and administrative records.

In the portions of Turkic historical works that address everyday life and cultural practices, Persian vocabulary is particularly prominent. Notably, Persian “izafa” constructions and other Persian syntactic patterns are widely employed in these passages, reflecting Persian’s stylistic influence on descriptions of social and domestic life.

Where chronicles and official registers tend to privilege a formal, administrative register, literary compositions more often deploy simile, metaphor, and other rhetorical figures. The oeuvre of a major Turkic author such as Alisher Nava’i clearly demonstrates the syncretic use of Persian and Arabic phraseology and lexemes – a synthesis that is evident even in the naming and stylistic framing of his works.

Overall, linguistic analysis of Turkic historical sources shows that Turkic absorbed stylistic and expressive models predominantly from Persian, while Arabic contributed chiefly to the terminological-technical stratum. In other words, the historical and literary sources of the Eastern world provide vivid examples of interlingual contact and cultural synthesis.

From a methodological standpoint, source-critical (source study) analysis investigates the circumstances of a work’s composition, its chronological characteristics, and the comparative study of its various manuscripts and recensions. Complementarily, linguistic (philological) analysis illuminates the phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features of the texts. When applied together – often through a toolkit that includes codicological and palaeographic examination, philological collation, and comparative (diachronic and synchronic) linguistic methods – these approaches enable a comprehensive and rigorous scholarly assessment of historical manuscripts.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Manuscript sources composed in the Eastern languages serve as living witnesses of their respective epochs. The authors of these works recorded invaluable information on political events, ruling dynasties, systems of state governance, social relations, and cultural life. Since most of them were personally immersed in the sociopolitical environment of their

time – as both participants and observers – their writings possess the status of “primary sources” of exceptional historical value.

An additional dimension of their importance lies in the “multilingual context” in which many of these works were produced. The coexistence of Arabic, Persian, and Turkic elements within a single textual tradition reveals a unique synthesis of linguistic and cultural influences characteristic of the intellectual life of medieval Central Asia.

At the same time, the study of such sources requires “critical and objective methodologies” from modern historians and source scholars. Authors of medieval chronicles, shaped by their political and social contexts, often expressed both favorable and unfavorable opinions about the events and rulers they described. Furthermore, many historical works were commissioned by monarchs, ruling dynasties, or court officials. Consequently, “instances of exaggeration, omission, or bias” in the depiction of political processes and events are not uncommon.

Therefore, it is essential to undertake “comparative textual analysis”, examining multiple manuscript copies or parallel works from the same historical period. Such comparison helps identify interpolations, ideological influences, and variations introduced through transmission.

Researchers who engage in the study and scholarly introduction of these manuscripts must possess a comprehensive interdisciplinary background. In particular, historians, philologists, linguists, art historians, and manuscript specialists must demonstrate “proficiency in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages”, along with mastery of critical and linguistic analysis techniques. This linguistic competence enables them to discern the deep interconnections among these traditions and to interpret their mutual influences accurately.

As previously emphasized, “Arabic” sources predominantly employ religious and political terminology; “Persian” works excel in poetic diction and descriptive expression; while “Turkic” sources exhibit vivid popular language and practical expression. Recognizing this triadic linguistic interplay underscores the vital role of comparative source analysis (comparative of source study) in the study of Eastern manuscripts. Through such a comprehensive and critical approach, it becomes possible to reconstruct not only the textual and linguistic features of these works but also the broader “intellectual, cultural, and civilizational context” in which they emerged.

### CONCLUSION

The study of historical sources written in Eastern languages – particularly the manuscript materials concerning the history of the peoples of Central Asia analyzed above is of great significance not only for linguistics, but also for the disciplines of history and source studies. These manuscripts provide rich insights into the internal development of languages, interlingual influence, and the history of cultural interactions across vast regions of the Eastern world. Beyond merely documenting historical events, these sources also reflect the political, socio-economic, trade, cultural, and folkloric dimensions of their time, while preserving invaluable data on the linguistic characteristics of the peoples who produced them.

Therefore, the comprehensive study of such manuscripts from both linguistic and source-critical perspectives, supported by modern scientific methodologies, remains one of the most pressing tasks for contemporary scholars. A deeper understanding of these texts not only enhances our knowledge of language evolution but also contributes to reconstructing the intellectual and civilizational heritage of Central Asia within the broader context of Eastern scholarship.

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