

Works On Gharib Al-Hadith And Their Role In The Development Of Arabic Lexicography

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Abstract: This article investigates the role of the Gharib al-Hadith (uncommon or obscure vocabulary in Hadith) discipline, which studies archaisms, dialectisms, and low-frequency vocabulary in Hadith texts, in the development of classical Arabic lexicography. It analyzes the essence of the concept of "Gharib" and the methodology of fundamental works created by scholars such as Abu Ubayd, al-Zamakhshari, and Ibn al-Athir. The research demonstrates that works on Gharib al-Hadith served as invaluable sources for later Arabic lexicographers, both in collecting lexical material and in developing methods for its organization. The conclusion emphasizes that this literature made a fundamental contribution to the advancement of Arabic lexicography.

Keywords: Gharib al-Hadith, Arabic lexicography, Hadith vocabulary, linguistics, archaism, dialectism, semantics, contextual analysis, corpus linguistics.

Introduction: Arabic linguists have paid special attention to the study of the language of the Holy Hadith. This is primarily explained by the fundamental function of Hadith in interpreting the rulings of the Holy Quran and explaining the foundations of Sharia. The Prophet (peace be upon him) articulated the meanings of the Quran in accordance with the highest standards of the classical Arabic language. This linguistic standard was preserved during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Companions (Sahaba), and the Successors (Tabi'un).

However, the passage of time, the distancing from the era of Prophethood, and the integration of Arabs with non-Arab peoples (Ajam) compromised the purity of the language. Linguistic skills weakened, and violations of linguistic norms became widespread in speech. It was during this period that a specialized scientific discipline emerged, aimed at explaining the "Gharib" (obscure/strange) words found in Hadiths.

This research aims to analyze the scholarly activities of ancient scholars regarding the interpretation of Hadith vocabulary and the exegesis of its obscure aspects. The study provides information on the main

representatives of this discipline and their significant works. Furthermore, it investigates the extent to which lexicographers utilized these valuable linguistic sources to collect lexical material and formulate principles for organization when compiling their dictionaries. The main objective is to reveal the influence of Gharib al-Hadith dictionaries in enriching classical Arabic lexicography.

Scientific Definition of the Concept of Gharib al-Hadith

The definitions given by Hadith scholars to the concept of "Gharib" are clearly reflected in their works, particularly in sources related to Hadith terminology. Ibn al-Salah devoted the thirty-second chapter of his work *Introduction to the Science of Hadith* (Muqaddimah Ibn al-Salah) to Gharib al-Hadith, defining it as follows: "It consists of words occurring in Hadith texts that are obscure in meaning and difficult to understand due to their infrequent usage" [Ibn al-Salah 1974, 195].

Al-Khattabi, in his book *Gharib al-Hadith*, explains the linguistic essence of the word "Gharib" through two aspects: "First, the remoteness and complexity of the word's meaning, such that it can only be understood

through deep contemplation. Second, its specificity to the speech of tribes living in geographically distant regions. If a word from their language reaches us, it is considered 'Gharib' (foreign/strange) to us, whereas for that people, it is a common lexical unit" [Al-Khattabi 1982, 1:3].

Al-Zamakhshari defines the function of this science as: "To discover the unfamiliar (Gharib) and ambiguous aspects in its (the Hadith's) words, and to explain the complex and unintelligible points in its intents" [Al-Zamakhshari 1970, 12].

Among modern researchers, Subhi Salih defines this science as follows: "The science of Gharib al-Hadith is a discipline that investigates the meanings of obscure words in the Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) which became difficult for the majority of people to understand after 'lahn' (linguistic deviation) entered the Arabic language" [As-Salih 1984, 112].

Analyzed from a modern linguistic perspective, it becomes clear that the term "Gharib" is a comprehensive concept encompassing several phenomena. Specifically, lexemes that have fallen out of use over time and become unfamiliar correspond to archaisms, while units specific to the speech of a certain tribe that are unintelligible to others correspond to dialectisms. Generally, the limited scope of usage of such lexical units allows them to be categorized as "low-frequency vocabulary" in modern corpus linguistics. Thus, the term "Gharib" served as a generalized term capable of expressing historical, geographical, and statistical rarity simultaneously.

Consequently, the term "Gharib" implies that a specific lexeme is in need of commentary and interpretation. This phenomenon is explained not by the complexity inherent in the word's nature or its rarity alone, but by the differences in the language proficiency of speakers: while some know the language deeply, others have shallower knowledge. Accordingly, "Gharib-ness is not an imminent feature of the word, but rather represents the relativity in the linguistic competence of the recipients (all or some of them) regarding the knowledge of the meaning" [Khalil 2003, 309–310]. Gharib al-Hadith formed as an independent science investigating the semantics of lexical units found in the texts of some Hadiths that are difficult for the general public to understand.

It is important to note that in Hadith studies, the term "Gharib" denotes two distinct concepts:

1. Gharib al-Hadith: The field dealing with the linguistic analysis of lexical units in the Hadith text (Matn).
2. Al-Hadith al-Gharib: A term related to the chain of narrators (Sanad) of the Hadith, applied to a type of

Hadith narrated through only one person; it is considered synonymous with the concept of "Fard" (solitary) by most scholars.

Factors Contributing to the Formation of Gharib Vocabulary

The occurrence of obscure vocabulary in the text of the Holy Hadith is linked to several factors. Experts in the field classify these factors into four main groups:

1. Religious-Linguistic Factor: The presence of Gharib words in the Prophet's (s.a.w.) Hadiths is not accidental; rather, it is evidence of the high rhetoric of his speech and his perfect knowledge of the various dialects of Arab tribes. The obscurity of certain words in some Hadiths does not contradict the eloquence of the Prophetic expression. "Because it was logically necessary for the language of the Prophet (s.a.w.) to be more eloquent than that of other humans sent to his people" [Amin 1975, 104]. Al-Rafi'i explains this with two aspects: "First, this is inspiration and success granted by Allah, enabling him to know the linguistic characteristics of various tribes and to address each people in their own language. Second, his life experience (birth, nursing, marriage, and migration) were important factors shaping his linguistic richness" [Al-Rafi'i n.d., 282–285].

2. Pragmatic Factor: This factor is related to certain words falling out of use and becoming infrequent in the eras following the Prophetic period. Due to the significant time gap between the Prophet's (s.a.w.) era and the time the first works on Gharib al-Hadith were written, some lexemes ceased active usage and became "Gharib." Consequently, they required explanation and commentary, a task undertaken by scholars aiming to serve the second source of Islamic Sharia.

3. Dialectal Factor: This factor is manifested in the diversity of dialects in the Arabic language. A word common for one tribe could be unknown (Gharib) to another. "One of the reasons motivating ancient scholars to write works in the field of Gharib al-Hadith was that some Hadiths contained vocabulary specific to a certain dialect" [Aror 2002, 205]. "The fact that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) addressed various tribes in their own dialects served the purpose of effectively conveying the meaning to their minds" [Atif 2004, 6–7].

4. Social Factor: This factor emerged as a result of the expansion of the Islamic state and the integration of Arabs with Ajam (non-Arab peoples). For non-Arabs who were newly learning the language and had recently converted to Islam, many words in eloquent Arabic were unfamiliar. Although this situation was not observed during the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Companions, it became widespread in later

centuries, especially with the entry of non-Arabic speaking peoples into Islam. Al-Khattabi explains the purpose of writing his book: "As time passed, the preservers of the language decreased, and errors in speech spread... thus... they deemed it necessary to pay attention to all Gharib words in Hadith and uncover their hidden meanings" [Al-Khattabi 1982, 1:46–47].

Scientific Approaches in the Classification of Gharib al-Hadith Dictionaries

Ancient scholars paid great attention to interpreting the obscure vocabulary of the Holy Hadith. However, works in this field were created somewhat later than those dedicated to Gharib al-Quran. Most researchers attribute the first work on Gharib al-Hadith to Abu Ubayda Ma'mar ibn al-Muthanna. In general, the creation of works on Gharib al-Hadith was part of a comprehensive scientific movement aimed at protecting the texts of the Quran and Sunnah from interpretational errors.

Ahmad al-Sharqawi Iqbal, in his dictionary *Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim*, listed fifty-five works dedicated to Gharib al-Hadith. Al-Sayyid al-Sharqawi noted one hundred and eleven books created in this field, indicating their adherence to the following classification methods:

1. **Sanad (Chain of Narrators) Method:** Organizing the work based on the chain of narrators of the Hadiths. Examples: *Gharib al-Hadith* by Abu Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam and by Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari.
2. **Method of Combining Two Gharibs:** Combining Gharib al-Quran and Gharib al-Hadith in a single work. Example: *Al-Gharibayn* by Abu Ubayd al-Harawi.
3. **Alphabetical Method:** Arranging lexical units in alphabetical order. Example: *Gharib Kitab al-Bukhari ala Huruf al-Mu'jam* by Abul Walid Hisham al-Sabuni.
4. **Method of Isolating Hadiths with Specific Characteristics:** Explaining the Gharib of a specific Hadith or a group of Hadiths. Example: *Manal al-Talib fi Sharh Tiwal al-Gharaib* by Ibn al-Athir.
5. **Source Selection Method:** Explaining the Gharib of a specific Hadith collection. Example: *Gharib Musnad al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* by Abu Umar al-Zahid.
6. **Istidrak (Supplementation) Method:** Filling in words omitted in previous works. Example: *Ad-Dala'il fi Sharh Gharib al-Hadith* by Qasim ibn Thabit al-Saraqusti.
7. **Critical Analysis Method:** Correcting errors in previous works, providing rebuttals, and explaining difficult issues. Example: *Islah al-Ghalat al-Waqi' fi Gharib al-Hadith* by Ibn Qutayba.
8. **Abridgment and Editing Method:** Condensing and reorganizing existing works. Example: *Mukhtasar Gharib al-Hadith* by Abul Hasan Abbad ibn al-Abbas.

The classifications cited above indicate that scholars of the classical Arabic period paid serious scientific attention to the field of Gharib al-Hadith and developed various methodological approaches in this regard.

Major Works on Gharib al-Hadith and Their Methodology

Scholars of this period created a number of fundamental works in the field of Gharib al-Hadith. The most famous among them are:

1. "Gharib al-Hadith" by Abu Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam: The product of forty years of the author's labor, this work is distinguished by its comprehensive scope and deep analysis. Abu Ubayd took the Gharib word in the Hadith, revealed its semantic facets, discussed its etymology, and mentioned the verb and its derivative forms. He cited evidence from Quranic verses, poetry, other Hadiths, and eloquent phrases to support his views. For example, he explained the phrase "hatfa anfihi" as "dying in one's own bed without any external cause," reinforcing it with other Hadiths and narrations.
2. "Gharib al-Hadith" by Ibn Qutayba: This work is considered a logical continuation and complement to Abu Ubayd's book. Ibn Qutayba found Gharib words that were overlooked by the previous author and interpreted them using almost the same method—citing derivative forms, verbal nouns (masdar), and finding evidence from the Quran, poetry, and proverbs. At the same time, he occasionally made corrections to some of Abu Ubayd's opinions.
3. "Gharib al-Hadith" by Al-Khattabi: Since linguistic deviations were widespread in the Arabic language during this period, Al-Khattabi dedicated his work to explaining the obscure vocabulary in Hadith and the words of the Sahaba and Tabi'un. According to his method, the Hadith to be explained and its Sanad are presented first, followed by the explanation of the Gharib word. The explanation is supported by examples taken from the Quran, Hadith, and ancient Arabic speech. Occasionally, jurisprudence (fiqh) issues are also touched upon. For instance, relying on the opinions of linguists like Tha'lab and Ibn al-A'rabi, he semantically analyzes the difference between the words "tajassus" (spying) and "tahassus" (seeking faults).
4. "Al-Fa'iq fi Gharib al-Hadith" by Al-Zamakhshari: This work aims not only to explain the meanings of Gharib words but also to reveal the legal/religious intents behind them according to the Hadith context. The work encompasses many linguistic phenomena such as syntax (nahw), morphology (saraf), rhetoric (balagha), derivation (ishtiqaq), synonymy, homonymy, antonymy, and dialectal diversity. For example, regarding the phrase "qalbi maximum", he connects the

word "maxnum" to the verb "khamamtu al-bayta" (I swept the house), providing an etymological-semantic analysis defining it as "a pure heart cleansed of malice and envy."

5. "An-Nihaya fi Gharib al-Hadith wal-Athar" by Ibn al-Athir: This work is considered one of the most comprehensive and perfect sources in the field of Gharib al-Hadith. Al-Suyuti called it "the greatest book written (in this field)." It contains more than three thousand Gharib words and phrases in alphabetical order, with concise and clear explanations. Ibn al-Athir's style possesses the following characteristics: arranging words alphabetically based on the first letter of the root; adhering to conciseness in explanations; limited use of poetic examples; and analyzing issues of jurisprudence and morphology.

Scientific Importance of Creating Works on Gharib al-Hadith

The Holy Hadith served as an impetus for the formation of many Islamic and linguistic sciences. Works in the field of Gharib al-Hadith facilitated the process of mastering religious-legal norms by ensuring the correct understanding of the Hadith text. Indeed, the correct comprehension of a word is the basis for perceiving the meaning in a specific text. This process began with Gharib al-Quran studies. Ibn Abbas's method of interpreting Quranic vocabulary by relying on ancient Arabic poetry later became the basis for Gharib al-Hadith research as well.

The method combining Gharib al-Quran and Gharib al-Hadith involves referring to the context in which these words were used among Arabs. Context allows for the identification of peripheral meanings specific to the situation, in addition to the word's literal meaning. Authors of Gharib al-Hadith researched the meaning of obscure words specifically through the living context in which they were used. For example, Ibn al-Athir distinguishes the meanings of the word "ma'bura" via context: in one instance as "pollinated palm trees," and in another as "cultivated arable land." These examples demonstrate the significant role of contextual analysis in revealing lexical semantics.

Forms of Utilization of Gharib al-Hadith Dictionaries by Linguistic Dictionaries

From the views in Ibn Manzur's Lisan al-Arab, it is understood that lexicographic activity in Arabic linguistics relies on two main processes: data collection (corpus formation) and organization.

1. Corpus Formation: Gharib al-Hadith works served as important linguistic sources for Arabic dictionaries. Ahmad ibn Faris notes that two of the five main sources he relied on for his work Maqayis al-Lugha were Abu

Ubayd's works on Gharib al-Hadith. Ibn Manzur also emphasizes that one of the five sources he relied on in creating his famous dictionary Lisan al-Arab was Ibn al-Athir's An-Nihaya fi Gharib al-Hadith wal-Athar. The An-Nihaya enriched the Lisan with Hadith examples, expanded its encyclopedic scope, and filled the gap left in previous dictionaries which had ignored such words under the excuse that "Hadith may be narrated by meaning (paraphrased)." Al-Saghani also lists several works on Gharib al-Hadith among the main sources for his dictionary Al-Ubab. Works on Gharib al-Hadith are also significant for preserving archaic vocabulary that was overlooked by some Arabic lexicographers as "inelegant" (ghayr fasih). In reality, these words are eloquent lexical units that fell out of use due to language changes. Although some scholars expressed varying opinions regarding the citation of Hadith as linguistic evidence, later lexicographers relied extensively on the works of their predecessors, particularly Gharib al-Hadith authors. Arabic researchers highlight six types of Hadiths that should be accepted as evidence in linguistics, and Gharib al-Hadith falls into the first three types. Statistical studies show that in ancient Arabic dictionaries, examples cited from the Holy Hadith rank second after the Quran.

2. Organizing Material: The primary function of a dictionary is to explain word meanings and arrange them in a specific order. Some works on Gharib al-Hadith influenced lexicography in this regard as well. For instance, Abu Ubayd al-Harawi's Al-Gharibayn, which combined Gharib al-Quran and Gharib al-Hadith, was compiled in alphabetical order. Ibn al-Athir notes that no one had used this ordering method in this field before him. The method of arranging words alphabetically based on the first letter without separating the word from its affixes was particularly widespread among Gharib al-Hadith authors because this method was considered convenient for the general, non-specialist reader.

Specialized Dictionaries That Can Be Created Based on Gharib al-Hadith Dictionaries

Based on the rich linguistic material collected in Gharib al-Hadith dictionaries, there are prospects for creating the following types of specialized dictionaries:

1. Historical-Etymological Dictionary: These works allow for tracking the semantic evolution of words from the time of our Prophet through subsequent centuries.
2. Dialectological Dictionary of Arab Tribes: These works would compile dialectal vocabulary specific to various Arab tribes that was used in Hadiths.
3. Fiqh-Terminological Dictionary: These sources record numerous terms related to worship, transactions, and other religious fields, serving as a basis for forming a

corpus of Islamic legal terminology.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, works on Gharib al-Hadith are important monuments not only of religious commentary but also of linguistic research. They contain deep scientific inquiries regarding semantic analysis, dialectology, etymology, and textual studies. These works demonstrate that their authors were encyclopedic scholars who had perfectly mastered both religious and linguistic knowledge. Most importantly, Gharib al-Hadith dictionaries served as invaluable sources for classical Arabic lexicography in terms of both lexical material and methodology, making a fundamental contribution to its development.

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