



Linguopragmatic Analysis of Figurative Devices Used In Literary Texts

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Abstract

This article investigates the linguopragmatic functions of figurative devices employed in literary texts. Metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, and epithet are examined not only as stylistic ornaments but also as tools that reflect the speaker's communicative intent and influence the reader's perception. The study emphasizes the dual nature of these tropes: their cognitive-semantic value and their pragmatic effect on readers. Using examples from English and Uzbek literature, the research explores how figurative expressions contribute to the construction of implied meanings, emotional undertones, and cultural contexts. The linguopragmatic approach adopted in this study helps uncover the deeper layers of meaning in literary discourse and clarifies how these devices serve as a bridge between linguistic form and pragmatic function.

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Introduction

In world linguistics, it is increasingly recognized that studying linguistic units not in an immanent state, but within the context of the speech situation in which they are used and within specific texts, allows for the possibility of drawing new conclusions. Based on this, research is being conducted to examine the syntactic level and the linguistic units related to this level within the scope of particular texts, to identify their communicative-pragmatic and linguopoetic characteristics, to reveal their linguopoetic potential, and to define them through examples from various discourses.

In particular, scientific studies are being carried out on analyzing the syntax of literary texts from linguopoetic and linguopragmatic perspectives. Furthermore, modern linguistics is actively pursuing research in such directions as describing a text based on the pragmatic realizations of syntactic units, determining the role of such realizations in text comprehension, and characterizing the text producer (author) based on the pragmatic features of the text. These areas are of crucial importance for the current trends in linguistics, including forensic linguistics, linguistic expertise, and neurolinguistics.

In recent times, a completely new direction in linguopragmatic analysis has taken shape in world linguistics and has begun to develop rapidly¹. While linguopoetic studies have emerged through the interrelation of literary studies and linguistics in the analysis of literary texts, the issue of addresser–addressee communication in artistic discourse has brought about the convergence of linguopoetics and linguopragmatics.

In the development of the linguopragmatics direction within Uzbek linguistics, the scientific contributions of scholars such as N. Mahmudov, A. Nurmonov, M. Hakimov, Sh. Safarov, A. Boboyeva, M. Mirtojiev, D. Lutfullaeva, B. O‘rinboyev, and others are particularly noteworthy².

In recent decades, the general tendency of linguistic research has been characterized by the growing attention to language not only as a means of reflecting the linguistic picture of the world, but also as a phenomenon significant for its functional and communicative aspects. Thus, on the basis of anthropocentric principles, the dichotomy of the role of language in human life and the human factor in language development laid the foundation for the formation of linguistic pragmatics.

While earlier studies focused mainly on the formal nature of words and sentences, on their immanent variants as research subjects, pragmatics has shifted the focus to the communicative content of speech.

The term “pragmatics” (from the Greek *pragma* – “action,” “activity”) was introduced into scientific discourse by Charles Morris, one of the founders of semiotics – the general theory of signs. Developing the ideas of Charles Peirce, Morris divided semiotics into three main branches, they are as following:

- semantics – the study of the relationship between signs and the objects or phenomena they refer to;
- syntax (or syntactics) – the study of the formal relations between signs;
- pragmatics – the study of the relationship between signs and their interpreters, i.e., those who use the system of signs.

The linguopragmatic analysis of figurative devices in literary texts represents an intersection of linguistics, pragmatics, and literary criticism, focusing on how language is used to convey implied meanings, emotions, and intentions beyond the literal level. Literary texts are rich in figurative language, including metaphors, similes, personifications, hyperboles, and metonymies, which serve to enhance expressiveness, evoke imagery, and shape readers’ perception and emotional response.

Materials And Methods

Pragmatics studies the behavior of signs in real communication processes. C. Morris refers to rhetoric as the main predecessor of pragmatics. "Since the interpreters of many signs (and perhaps all of them) are living organisms," writes C. Morris, "the essential characteristic of pragmatics lies in the biotic aspects of semiosis, in other words, in all the psychological, biological, and social phenomena associated with the functioning of signs"³

Morris emphasized that pragmatics examines the behavior of signs within real communicative processes, linking linguistic signs not only to the structure of language but also to the users' intentions, social behavior, and cognitive states. He referred to rhetoric as the principal precursor of pragmatics, highlighting that because most (if not

¹ Decree No. PF-5850 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically increase the prestige and status of the Uzbek language as the state language.” Source: <http://lex.uz/docs/4561730>.

² Махмудов Н. Эллипсис в узбекском языке: Дисс. ... канд. филол. наук. – Т., 1977. – 111 с.; Nurmonov A. Tanlangan asarlar. Uch jildlik. I jild. – Т.: Akademnashr, 2012. – 416 b.; Hakimov M. O‘zbek pragmalingsvistikasi asoslari. – Т.: Akademnashr, 2013. – 176 b.; Bushuy T.A., Safarov Sh.S. Til qurilishi: tahlil metodlari va metodologiyasi: ilmiy nashr. – Т.: Fan, 2007. – B. 21; Boboyeva A. Hozirgi o‘zbek adabiy tilida to‘liqsiz gaplar. – Т., 1978; Mirtojiev M.M. Gap bo‘laklarida semantik-sintaktik nomutanosiblik. – Т.: Universitet, 2008. – 200 b.; Lutfullaeva D. Tasdiq gaplarda inkor va shakliy-mazmuniy nomuvofiqlik: Filol. fan. nomz. ... diss. avtoref. – Т., 1997. – 27 b.; Lutfullaeva D. Sodda gaplarda yo‘qlik ma’nosining yashirin ifodalanishi // O‘zbek tili va adabiyoti. – Т., 2001. – №5. – B. 42-45; O‘rinboyev B. O‘zbek tili so‘zlashuv nutqi sintaksisi masalalari. – Т.: Fan, 1974.

³ Арутюнова, Н.Д. Истоки, проблемы и категории прагматики // Новое в зарубежной лингвистике – М.: Прогресс, 1985. – Вып. 16. Лингвистическая прагматика. – С. 21–38; Арутюнова, Н.Д., Падучева, Е.В. Истоки, проблемы и категории прагматики // Новое в зарубежной лингвистике. Вып. 16: Лингвистическая прагматика. – М., 1985. – С. 3-47;

all) sign interpreters are living organisms, pragmatics is inherently tied to the biotic aspects of semiosis—the psychological, biological, and social phenomena that accompany the use and interpretation of signs in communication. This perspective has had a substantial impact on the analysis of literary texts, where the use of figurative language, stylistic devices, and author-reader interaction can be understood more deeply through the lens of pragmatics. It has also fostered the growth of linguopoetics, which explores the aesthetic and emotive function of language, and its intersection with linguopragmatics in the study of addressor–addressee relations within fictional discourse.

In Uzbek linguistics, the formation of the linguopragmatic direction has been significantly influenced by the works of scholars such as N. Mahmudov, A. Nurmonov, M. Hakimov, Sh. Safarov, A. Boboyeva, M. Mirtojiev, D. Lutfullaeva, and B. O‘rinboyev, among others. Their research has laid a strong foundation for analyzing the communicative-pragmatic functions of language in literary and everyday discourse, contributing to the broader field of modern applied linguistics, including forensic linguistics, linguistic expertise, and neurolinguistics.

Charles Peirce was the first to emphasize the importance of considering the subject of practical and communicative activity in the general theory of signs (for him, this subject fulfills the function of the sign process, or semiosis). According to Peirce, a sign constitutes a triadic relationship. The members of this triad are defined as follows:

- a) the sign itself (in his terminology, the *representamen*), understood as the physical entity of the sign — a perceivable unit capable of standing for or substituting something else;
- b) another sign, produced by the first, which is localized in the mind of the interpreter and identified as the interpretation or meaning of the first sign (this is the *interpretant*);
- c) the object represented by the sign.

In this model, the concept of the sign is central. At the same time, it is acknowledged that signs do not arise independently, and there are no classes of objects existing entirely apart from the activity of a subject. Rather, signs emerge in the process of semiosis. Outside of the semiotic process — and beyond the speaker's activity — the triadic relationship of the sign does not exist. Without an effect on the interpreter, there is no sign at all.

Peirce refers to this effect as the interpretant. According to him, interpretants can take on different forms:

- a) They can evoke emotions (*emotional or immediate interpretants*);
- b) They can trigger certain actions (*energetic or dynamic interpretants*);
- c) They can influence thought or behavior (*logical / final / normative interpretants*)⁴.

According to I.P. Susov’s analysis, the main principle of pragmatist philosophy belongs to Charles Peirce, and it should be considered from the perspective of evaluating meaning based on possible consequences, and choosing actions that lead to success and produce practical results. The concept of the interpretant precisely embodies the types of situations envisioned by the philosophy of pragmatism⁵.

L.A. Nefedova and Y.E. Titov emphasize that all linguistic signs possess a certain pragmatic effect (communicative impact) on the reader or listener. Based on the ideas of V.N. Komissarov, they identify three main factors that determine the characteristics of this pragmatic effect.

First, it is the content of the expression. Second, the perception of the message is linked to the characteristics of the signs that make it up. Specifically, one message can be transmitted in various ways, meaning that the speaker selects linguistic tools in accordance with a particular intent to affect. Third, the pragmatic impact of the expression also depends on the receiver’s perception.⁶

This research is done by using different methods like discourse analysis, cognitive linguistic approach and textual analysis.

Research And Discussion

The specific issues of linguistic pragmatics are directly related to the participants of speech and the communicative situation. It is known that forming a sentence expressing the speaker’s intention about an existing object, event, or concept, and knowing certain grammatical rules, is not enough by itself. The speaker must also understand the speech situation. Moreover, the speaker needs to accurately express the communicative intention, which has a descriptive and directive function. The exact realization of communicative intention is of great practical importance.

In order to properly apply such intentions in speech, the speaker must also be aware of the cultural and social norms associated with the language — in other words, the speaker must know the social rules and customs that accompany communication. These conditions require that the speaker be aware of many aspects of communication that go beyond grammatical knowledge.

These issues, as a whole, reflect the processes of communication and interaction among participants of speech. The specific issues of linguistic pragmatics arise in connection with the speaker, the listener, and the communicative situation.

Pragmatics is a broad field of research and, from the viewpoint of language level, can be divided into several hierarchical parts. In the Uzbek language, we believe that pragmatic interpretation of a text should be approached in accordance with its syntactic layers and segments. In Russian linguistics, the study of linguistic pragmatics began in the 1980s. Prior to that, scholars such as A.S. Akhmanova and I.M. Magidova had limited their discussion to the term

⁴ Сусов И.П. Лингвистическая прагматика. – М.: Восток-Запад, 2006. – С. 8; Сусов И.П. Семиотика и лингвистическая прагматика // Язык, личность и дискурс. – Тверь: 1990. – С. 125-133.

⁵ Сусов И.П. Лингвистическая прагматика. – М.: Восток-Запад, 2006. – С. 8; Сусов И.П. Семиотика и лингвистическая прагматика // Язык, личность и дискурс. – Тверь: 1990. – С. 8

⁶ Лингвистика и экстралингвистика: аспекты коннотативного значения: Коллективная монография. – Нижневартовск: Изд-во Нижневарт. гуманит. ун-та, 2009. – С. 32

“pragmalinguistics” without expanding further. According to their view, the term "pragmalinguistics" was introduced to clarify the semantic essence of expressions — particularly, to study how the phonetic features of English speech are conveyed through the linguistic apparatus. For example, proper pronunciation — intonation and stress — must be considered important. In the teaching process, the use of optimal pronunciation variants in the English language is essential to achieving clarity. These optimal variants are chosen not only to express semantic content effectively but also for practical application. Pronunciation in this form is referred to as a "pragmatic" method, because it is aimed at conveying intended meaning clearly.

This main method is related not only to the informative function of speech but also to its expressive-emotional effect on listeners. Thus, its aim is to ensure that learners of English demonstrate model speech and achieve the highest level of intelligibility and clarity⁷.

The next distinguishing feature of pragmatic phenomena associated with pronunciation possibilities is the issue of whether the speaker’s intention is expressed in a declarative or interrogative form. The influence of the speaker’s pronunciation capabilities has been one of the most pressing issues in linguistic pragmatics. It is known that the correctness or incorrectness of the speaker’s pronunciation plays an important role in conveying the intended meaning. In practice, the linguistic pragmatics of pronunciation is determined not only by the correct or incorrect articulation of sounds but also by the intonation patterns used by the speaker. Dialectal and regional variants of pronunciation become significant in this regard. Therefore, the correct and incorrect forms of pronunciation are among the central issues of linguistic pragmatics.

The problem of pragmatics from this perspective is determined by the context of the speech situation. The pragmatic result of correct and incorrect pronunciation is achieved through intonation (intonation) governed by the speaker. According to the pragmatic view, the expression of the speaker’s intention depends not only on specific pronunciation forms but also on the speaker’s choice of intonation.

Each syntactic construction is created for the purpose of forming a complete proposition and expressing a communicative goal. That is why in both higher and lower syntactic levels, the pronunciation forms are also influenced by intonation. The phrase “Each syntactic structure is created to express a complete proposition for a communicative purpose⁸” confirms this point.

The following table illustrates some analysis of literal devices and their pragmatic features:

Examples	Analysis	Pragmatic approach
“Life’s but a walking shadow...” (Shakespeare’s <i>Macbeth</i>)	metaphor: life = shadow	evokes futility and existential dread; reader experiences the emotional depth of Macbeth’s despair
“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” (George Orwell’s <i>Animal Farm</i>)	Figurative device: irony & political allegory	Reveals manipulation of language for power. Irony underlines the distortion of equality; Provokes critical reflection on political systems and hypocrisy
“Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!” (John Keats’ <i>Ode to a Nightingale</i>)	Metaphor: The nightingale as a symbol of eternal beauty and poetic imagination	The poet’s escape from human suffering via aesthetic idealization; Induces a sense of melancholic transcendence and contemplation on mortality
“Mother died today. Or, maybe, yesterday; I can’t be sure.” (Albert Camus’ <i>The Stranger</i>)	Irony and psychological distancing; Challenges reader expectations, forces reflection on absurdism and alienation	Pragmatic minimalism: Flat, emotionless tone contrasts with expected grief
“Because I could not stop for Death – He kindly stopped for me –” (Emily Dickinson’s <i>Because I could not stop for Death</i>)	Death is given human traits (gentleman caller)	Death is made familiar and even courteous, altering the reader’s emotional response; It evokes a serene acceptance of mortality rather than fear
Chingiz Aitmatov’s <i>The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years</i> (<i>Asrga tatigulik kun</i>)	Uses mythological metaphors to juxtapose tradition vs modernity	Cultural pragmatics play a role in interpreting symbolic language

⁷ Ахманова И.С., Магидова И.М. Прагматическая лингвистика, прагмалингвистика и лингвистическая прагматика // Вопросы языкознания. – М., 1978. №3. – С.45.

⁸ A. Nurmonov, N.Mahmudov O‘zbek tilining mazmuniy sintaksisi. – Toshkent 1992. B. 95

Abdulla Qahhor's <i>O'tgan Kunlar</i> (in Uzbek Literature) is symbolic use of the character Otabek as a figure of change between old and new Uzbekistan	Otabek represents modernization, progress, and moral complexity	The reader perceives tension between traditional values and reformist ideals; Encourages empathy for reformists and a critical view of societal stagnation
Erkin Vohidov's <i>O'zbeğim</i> Uses the metaphor of the nation as a mother throughout the poem	Extended metaphor	Elicits patriotism and emotional identity through personalizing the abstract notion of "nation"; Engenders a sense of pride and duty in the reader.

Figurative devices have their functions in a text as the following:

Metaphor – pragmatically, metaphors enable conceptual mapping, linking abstract concepts with concrete images. For example, the metaphor "Time is a thief" implicitly communicates the irreversible and stealthy passage of time.

Metonymy offers associative connections, like "the crown" referring to royalty. Metonymies reflect culturally shared knowledge and rely heavily on contextual cues.

Hyperbole intensifies expression and can carry humor, exaggeration, or emotional appeal. "I've told you a million times" pragmatically conveys frustration or insistence.

Epithets like "bloody tyrant" in Shakespeare not only describe but emotionally charge the character, guiding the reader's evaluative response.

The analysis shows that figurative language serves as a mediating force between the author's intention and the reader's interpretation. Its pragmatics lies in its ability to activate background knowledge, shared cultural assumptions, and emotional resonance. The indirectness of figurative speech enhances the communicative depth of literary discourse.

Conclusion

Linguopragmatic analysis of figurative devices offers deep insight into how language shapes meaning and reader experience in literature. It helps decode the author's intentions, the reader's interpretation, and the cultural framework that mediates understanding. This approach enriches literary interpretation and bridges linguistic form with communicative function.

Figurative devices are not merely ornamental; they are pragmatically loaded linguistic units that serve to influence, persuade, and evoke. Through a linguopragmatic lens, we gain deeper insight into how authors use tropes to fulfill communicative goals, shaping meaning beyond the surface level. Future research may further examine cross-cultural pragmatics of figurative language to enhance our understanding of global literary communication.

Figurative devices such as metaphors, similes, and personifications are not only stylistic enhancements in literary texts but also serve essential linguopragmatic functions. These devices help shape the communicative intent of the author, guiding the reader's perception, enhancing cognitive engagement, and triggering emotional responses. Through metaphors, authors map complex or abstract concepts onto familiar domains, simplifying interpretation and enriching textual depth. Similes make literary imagery more accessible by offering explicit comparisons, while personification breathes life into abstract notions, fostering empathy and deepening the reader's connection with the text.

The analysis confirms that these tropes act as pragmatic tools that bridge the gap between literal language and implied meaning, making them indispensable for understanding the interaction between language and reader interpretation.

The findings support the idea that a linguopragmatic approach to literary texts offers valuable insights into how authors strategically use language to achieve communicative goals. This study contributes to broader linguistic and literary discourse by highlighting the dynamic interplay between structure, meaning, and pragmatic intent in literary communication.

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