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LEXICAL AND EMBODIED REPRESENTATIONS OF FEAR IN SELECTED PASSAGES FROM DREISER AND HOSHIMOV

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Abstract

This extended conference thesis examines the linguistic representation of fear in selected passages from Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy and Utkir Hoshimov's Tushda kechgan umrlar. Qualitative contrastive close reading distinguishes explicit emotion naming from descriptions of bodily manifestations and figurative bodily imagery. The English examples connect emotional attribution with perspiration, stiffness, interrupted movement, and internal coldness. The Uzbek examples represent distress through vocal trembling and intensified cardiac imagery. Both sets of passages make emotion accessible through the body, but their expressions differ in lexical structure and interpretive specificity. The analysis also considers anger and literal cold as alternative explanations, preventing bodily vocabulary from being treated as an automatic indicator of fear. The findings concern identifiable passages and do not establish language-wide or national psychological differences.

Keywords: fear; lexical semantics; embodied emotion; metaphor; metonymy; contrastive stylistics.

Literary fear can be explicitly named or communicated through what happens to a character's body. These possibilities create a problem for contrastive analysis: expressions may suggest a similar emotional condition while encoding different components of that condition. A phrase can identify the emotion itself, a physical consequence, or an image through which its intensity is understood. Treating all three as interchangeable dictionary equivalents would obscure how the text guides interpretation.

This thesis compares selected English and Uzbek expressions to determine how emotional naming interacts with bodily description. Its central question is whether a passage identifies fear directly or requires the reader to infer it from a manifestation. A related question concerns the boundary between literal sensation and figurative imagery. The comparison is linguistic rather than an attempt to equate the novels' plots, protagonists, or historical situations.

Wierzbicka (1999) cautions against assuming that familiar English emotion categories apply unchanged across languages and cultures. Accordingly, fear functions here as an analytical starting point whose relevance must be checked against each passage. Kövecses (1990) provides a complementary perspective by investigating emotion concepts and their figurative organisation. Together, these approaches support attention to both contextual meaning and the bodily images through which an emotion becomes intelligible.

The distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning draws on the methodological concerns of the Pragglejaz Group (2007). Its metaphor identification procedure provides a reference for asking how a word's contextual interpretation relates to a more basic physical meaning. The present close reading does not claim to reproduce the full procedure with independent annotators. Instead, it states the grounds for individual interpretations and preserves ambiguity where a literal reading remains plausible.

The English evidence comes from Book Three, Chapters VI and VIII, of An American Tragedy, using volume two of the 1925 Boni and Liveright edition available through Project Gutenberg. Book and chapter references provide stable locators for the electronic text. The Uzbek evidence comes

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from printed pages 12 and 18–19 of the 2019 Ilm-ziyo-zakovat edition of Tushda kechgan umrlar. English glosses are analytical translations rather than quotations from a published English version.

The sample is purposive: the passages contain bodily expressions whose relation to fear can be examined in context. Each expression is considered in terms of lexical form, emotional attribution, literal plausibility, and narrative situation. Three categories are distinguished: direct naming, bodily manifestations that support an emotional inference, and figurative representations of bodily experience. A description may combine categories, so the classification does not require every passage to belong exclusively to one.

Alternative interpretations are essential. Trembling can accompany anger; coldness can describe an external physical event; intensified cardiac activity can accompany exertion. Such possibilities must be assessed before an expression is classified as fear-related. The study therefore reports qualitative observations rather than frequencies, significance tests, or claims about the distribution of vocabulary throughout either complete novel.

In the woodland episode, Dreiser combines “cold sweat” with “rigid and motionless with fear” (1925, Book Three, Chapter VI). The explicit emotion noun constrains the interpretation of the bodily description. Without that attribution, stillness could suggest exhaustion, calculated concealment, or concentrated attention. Naming the emotion connects the physical condition with a particular psychological explanation.

The coordinated adjectives identify related but distinguishable features. Stiffness concerns the body’s condition, whereas lack of movement concerns action. Together, they make fear visible as inhibition. The phrase therefore does more than intensify an emotion label: it specifies how the represented emotion affects the character’s capacity to move. This interaction between naming and description is a local stylistic choice rather than evidence that English generally requires explicit emotional categorisation.

Perspiration adds another bodily dimension. It is physically possible in the represented situation and should not automatically be labelled metaphorical. Its emotional significance arises from its conjunction with interrupted movement and direct attribution of fear. The passage demonstrates why a bodily expression should be analysed within its phrase and narrative context rather than detached as an isolated lexical item.

Hoshimov describes Dilya speaking with “ovozi titrab”, glossed as her voice trembling, after an unsettling sound (2019, p. 12). The expression presents an audible manifestation of distress. Its relation to emotion can be understood metonymically: a perceptible bodily effect allows a reader or interlocutor to infer an internal condition. The voice may literally tremble, so this inference does not require a metaphorical interpretation of the movement itself.

The surrounding situation makes fear a plausible interpretation, but the expression alone does not uniquely identify it. This matters when comparing the Uzbek example with Dreiser’s explicit attribution. One passage supplies a named psychological cause; the other directs attention to an observable manifestation. The contrast lies in how much interpretive work the surrounding context performs.

The description of Rustam’s shaking hands during the wedding disturbance provides a useful counterexample (Hoshimov, 2019, p. 18). Anger is present in that context. Consequently, the movement cannot be assigned to fear solely because trembling is often associated with fright. The example shows that lexical resemblance between bodily descriptions does not establish emotional equivalence. It also explains why a simple search for movement vocabulary would produce potentially misleading results.

Shahnoza’s hurried pursuit on page 19 is accompanied by “Yuragi qinidan chiqqudek”, approximately her heart almost bursting out (Hoshimov, 2019). Here an internal organ is represented

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as moving beyond its normal containment. The image intensifies arousal through a figurative possibility rather than an ordinary visible symptom. Alarm for another person and hurried movement both contribute to the context; the expression is therefore best interpreted as fear-related arousal rather than an exclusively fear-denoting label.

Dreiser's arrest scene uses "blood to run cold with fear" (1925, Book Three, Chapter VIII). Internal coldness is explicitly linked to emotional disturbance. Its bodily imagery differs from the Uzbek cardiac expression, but both make an internal experience available through a concrete physical representation. Functional resemblance can therefore coexist with differences in the chosen image. Neither expression needs to be treated as a word-for-word equivalent of the other.

Literal cold water in Hoshimov's wedding scene establishes an additional boundary (2019, p. 19). The water is an external event, whereas Dreiser's coldness belongs to the representation of an internal response. Shared temperature vocabulary does not, by itself, establish a shared metaphor. The analyst must distinguish the threatening or surprising stimulus from the language used to describe its emotional consequences.

The passages support a distinction between what names fear and what helps readers recognise it. Direct attribution reduces ambiguity, bodily manifestations invite inference, and figurative images intensify an experience through concrete representation. Their interaction is more informative than a list of presumed synonyms. Leech and Short's (2007) linguistic approach to fictional prose supports this attention to the relation between local form and literary effect.

For translation, preserving a general emotion label may be insufficient. Replacing a bodily image with a simple statement of fear can remove information about intensity, movement, or the character's embodied perspective. A literal rendering may produce the opposite problem by retaining the image while losing idiomatic force. Analytical glosses should therefore explain the expression's function and avoid implying perfect equivalence where only partial correspondence has been established.

The sample is small and has not been independently annotated. It cannot show which author uses bodily imagery more frequently or establish broad differences between English and Uzbek. A larger study would need balanced sampling and explicit treatment of ambiguous cases. The present results nevertheless provide identifiable examples and clear criteria for extending the analysis without inventing numerical certainty.

Fear in the selected passages is constructed through the interaction of lexical naming and embodied representation. Dreiser's examples connect explicit emotional attribution with physical inhibition and internal coldness, while Hoshimov's examples reveal how vocal manifestations and cardiac imagery support contextual interpretation. Their common feature is the linguistic accessibility of emotion through the body. Their differences concern the particular form, image, and degree of explicitness. Literal sensations and manifestations associated with other emotions must remain distinct from securely identified expressions of fear.

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