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FEAR AND ITS REGULATION IN FICTIONAL DISCOURSE IN SELECTED PASSAGES FROM DREISER AND HOSHIMOV

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Abstract

This extended conference thesis explores how lexical expressions of fear function within fictional discourse in Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy and Utkir Hoshimov's Tushda kechgan umrlar. Qualitative contrastive close reading examines apprehensive action, the interpretation of unfamiliar stimuli, reassurance, and imagined instructions that suppress hesitation. Particular attention is given to negative imperatives whose lexical correspondence does not guarantee pragmatic equivalence. Hoshimov's reassurance is supported by identifying a previously uncertain stimulus, whereas Dreiser's imagined instruction forms part of a programme of intended action. The comparison shows that fear vocabulary can describe an emotional condition or attempt to regulate a response. Speaker position, addressee, knowledge, and intended action are therefore necessary components of analysis. Findings remain limited to the selected passages and do not establish general cultural or language-wide tendencies.

Keywords: fear; pragmatics; fictional discourse; reassurance; negative imperative; contrastive analysis.

An expression containing a fear word may perform several functions. It can describe an experience, explain behaviour, or seek to change what another person does. These functions cannot be inferred from the emotion term alone. A contrastive analysis that treats every instance as evidence of the same emotional state risks confusing the description of fear with an attempt to manage it.

The present thesis examines the relationship between lexical meaning and discourse function in selected passages from Dreiser and Hoshimov. Its main question is how comparable fear expressions acquire different pragmatic purposes. It also asks how uncertainty about a situation becomes relevant to emotional interpretation. The novels provide linguistic material for comparison without requiring their characters or moral circumstances to be treated as equivalent.

Wierzbicka (1999) approaches emotion through language and culturally shaped ways of speaking. This perspective discourages the assumption that an English label automatically captures every aspect of an Uzbek expression. In the present analysis, correspondence is assessed through contextual function as well as broad emotional meaning. A lexical match is useful evidence, but it does not establish that two utterances position their speakers and addressees in the same way.

Leech and Short (2007) provide a linguistic basis for studying fictional prose, including the relationship between textual form and interpretation. Semino (2007) discusses fictional minds through cognitive and pragmatic perspectives. These approaches support a distinction between narration, immediate dialogue, and an imagined voice. Such a distinction is especially relevant when an imperative appears inside a character's projected course of action rather than in an ordinary exchange between speakers.

The English source is volume two of the 1925 Boni and Liveright edition of An American Tragedy, accessed through Project Gutenberg. The principal example occurs in Book Two, Chapter XLV, with Book Three, Chapter VI, supplying contextual evidence about the interpretation of an uncertain sound. Book and chapter locators are used instead of unstable electronic page numbers. The Uzbek examples are on printed pages 12–13 of the 2019 Ilm-ziyo-zakovat edition of Tushda kechgan umrlar.

The study uses purposive qualitative close reading. Each expression is examined in relation to who experiences fear, who names or addresses it, what is known about the stimulus, and what response is encouraged. Descriptive expressions are distinguished from directives. English glosses of Uzbek forms

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explain the present analysis; they are not presented as extracts from an established English translation of the novel.

The common basis of comparison is the representation or regulation of a response to perceived threat. This permits comparison across different grammatical forms while preserving the function of each passage. Findings concern local relationships between language, situation, and intended action.

Hoshimov uses “qo‘rqa-pisa”, contextually glossed as apprehensively, when Shahnoza looks into unfamiliar accommodation and immediately withdraws (2019, p. 12). The expression characterises the manner of action. It embeds an emotional orientation within an approach to a space rather than presenting fear as a separate abstract proposition. The reader understands apprehension partly through how the character moves and partly through the unfamiliar setting.

This construction illustrates an important distinction between lexical classification and discourse interpretation. Identifying the expression as fear-related is only the first analytical step. Its placement also matters: the emotion accompanies a limited movement of inspection and withdrawal. A translation that simply states that the character feels fear would retain a broad psychological category while weakening the relation between emotion and action.

Uncertainty about a stimulus also contributes to Dreiser’s woodland scene. An unexpected sound interrupts Clyde’s progress and is subsequently identified as a bird’s call (1925, Book Three, Chapter VI). This example supplies a functional point of comparison with the Uzbek scenes: what is perceived and what is understood need not coincide. The passage invites the reader to connect emotional response with interpretation rather than treating the stimulus as threatening in itself.

The shared mechanism does not make the situations equivalent. The characters occupy different circumstances, and the consequences of their interpretations differ. The relevant commonality is narrower: incomplete identification of a stimulus creates conditions in which apprehension becomes intelligible. A defensible contrastive argument preserves those contextual differences instead of deriving a general account of national emotional behaviour from two literary examples.

Hoshimov’s “Qo‘rqmang”, glossed as do not be afraid, occurs after Rustam identifies the source of Shahnoza’s nocturnal fright as a mouse (2019, p. 13). The negative imperative attempts to influence an emotional response. It therefore differs from a narrator’s statement that a character is frightened. Its function is prospective: it addresses what the addressee should cease feeling or how she should respond next.

The preceding identification gives the reassurance a situational basis. A previously uncertain sensation is assigned a recognisable source, and the instruction encourages the addressee to reinterpret it. Reassurance thus depends on more than grammatical negation. The speaker supplies information that may reduce uncertainty and presents a calmer understanding of the event. The relationship between explanation and directive makes the utterance pragmatically meaningful.

Dreiser’s “Do not fear!” appears within imagined instructions associated with Clyde’s plan (1925, Book Two, Chapter XLV). The construction resembles the Uzbek negative imperative at the level of broad lexical meaning. Its discourse position, however, changes its function. It belongs to a projected sequence of action in which fear is treated as an obstacle to proceeding.

In the Uzbek scene, explanation identifies a stimulus and supports reassurance. In Dreiser’s passage, the imagined instruction seeks to suppress hesitation within an intended course of conduct. The two utterances therefore differ in the relationship between knowledge and action. Recognising a source of fright and urging persistence despite fear are distinct operations, even when their verbal forms can be translated into similar words.

The distinction does not reside in the imperative alone. Nothing in that grammatical structure determines whether it comforts, pressures, or encourages dangerous conduct. Interpretation requires attention to the represented speaker position, the addressee, and the action being promoted. In an imagined exchange, the source of authority is itself part of the character’s mental representation rather than an independently reassuring companion.

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This comparison demonstrates a limit of translation equivalence. Two expressions may correspond lexically while performing different pragmatic work. An analytical translation should therefore retain information about who appears to speak and why the instruction occurs. Suppressing that context would make the examples seem more alike than they are and would obscure the relation between emotional language and narrative responsibility.

The selected examples distinguish the description of apprehension from the regulation of a response. Manner expressions connect emotion with action; explanatory speech reduces situational uncertainty; an imagined imperative may urge action by discounting hesitation. These functions should be recorded separately even when they share fear vocabulary. The unit of interpretation is the expression in its discourse environment, not the isolated emotion word.

The comparison also clarifies why lexical searches require contextual review. A search may identify both a narrator's description and a negative imperative, but those instances do not necessarily make equivalent claims about emotional experience. Treating them as a single category would mix representation with regulation. A later corpus study should therefore distinguish descriptive uses, interpersonal directives, and imagined instructions before drawing conclusions about distribution.

The evidence is limited to a small purposive sample. It cannot establish which author uses reassurance more frequently, how actual readers respond, or whether the observed patterns are typical of either language. The broader contribution is methodological: lexical correspondence becomes more informative when speaker position, knowledge, and intended action are made explicit. This approach preserves common ground while allowing differences in narrative function to remain visible.

Fear expressions in the selected passages participate in both emotional description and response management. Hoshimov links apprehensive action with unfamiliar situations and offers reassurance through explanatory speech. Dreiser's imagined instruction treats fear as hesitation to be overcome within a projected plan. The comparison shows that similar wording can sustain different pragmatic purposes. A sound contrastive interpretation therefore combines lexical analysis with attention to discourse position and context, without extending local findings into claims about entire languages or cultures.

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