SEMANTIC AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF EMOTION-DENOTING ABSTRACT NOUNS IN UZBEK

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Abstract. This paper presents a theoretical discussion of emotion-denoting abstract nouns in Uzbek, focusing on the relationship between lexical meaning and contextual interpretation. Particular attention is paid to quvonch (joy), qo'rquv (fear), qayg'u (sorrow), umid (hope), and iztirob (anguish). These nouns name experiences that cannot be directly observed as physical objects but can be expressed through language, behaviour, and narrative description. The discussion outlines how their semantic properties and pragmatic functions can be examined in literary discourse.

Keywords. abstract nouns, emotional states, Uzbek language, lexical semantics, pragmatics, literary discourse.

Introduction

Abstract nouns enable speakers and writers to name feelings, qualities, processes, and ideas. Emotion-denoting abstract nouns are particularly significant because they turn subjective experiences into concepts that can be described, evaluated, and discussed. In literary discourse, they can contribute to the representation of a character's inner world and influence how readers interpret events. Lyons (1995, pp. 75–101) distinguishes denotation from reference and emphasises the role of semantic relations in explaining lexical meaning. This distinction provides a theoretical starting point for examining nouns that name emotional experiences.

The analysis of these nouns requires attention to both their lexical meanings and the situations in which they occur. A noun may identify an emotion, while the surrounding text indicates its cause, intensity, duration, and significance. The present paper is a qualitative conceptual analysis of five selected Uzbek nouns, rather than a report of a completed literary corpus study. Its examples are constructed for illustration; no frequency estimates or claims about particular authors are made.

Semantic Features

Emotion-denoting abstract nouns can be compared according to several dimensions, including emotional valence, intensity, and temporal orientation. For example, quvonch generally denotes a positive emotional experience, whereas qayg'u and iztirob denote painful experiences. However, these distinctions should not be treated as rigid classifications: emotions may coexist, and their interpretation may change within a narrative.

The meaning of umid typically involves an orientation towards a desired possibility. Qo'rquv, by contrast, involves the perception or anticipation of danger. Their interpretation therefore depends partly on what a person hopes for or fears. English glosses are used as approximate explanatory equivalents. Wierzbicka (1999) cautions against treating English emotion categories as a neutral framework for all languages. Consequently, the Uzbek items should be interpreted through their own contexts rather than assumed to match English categories exactly.

Collocations provide another useful analytical dimension. In illustrative expressions such as chuqur qayg'u ("deep sorrow") and kuchli qo'rquv ("intense fear"), adjectives specify the degree of an

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emotional experience. Such combinations offer a way to investigate how language represents differences in emotional intensity. Here, “deep” provides an illustrative spatial description of an abstract experience. Croft and Cruse (2004) discuss metaphor and the importance of contextual interpretation in figurative language. Whether this pattern is frequent in Uzbek literary usage requires further evidence.

Pragmatic Functions

In context, emotional nouns can perform functions beyond naming a feeling. They may support characterisation, express evaluation, or guide the reader’s attention towards a particular interpretation.

Compare the constructed examples U qo‘rquvni his qildi (“He/She felt fear”) and Qo‘rquv uning qaroriga ta’sir qildi (“Fear influenced his/her decision”). The first identifies an emotional experience; the second presents that experience as a factor shaping behaviour. This distinction illustrates how sentence structure and context affect the communicative role of an abstract noun.

The source of an emotional description is also important. An emotion named by a narrator may represent an interpretation of a character’s behaviour, whereas the same noun in direct speech may express the character’s own understanding of that experience.

Directions for Further Research

A systematic study could use a clearly defined corpus of contemporary Uzbek literary texts. Each occurrence could be examined according to its lexical meaning, modifiers, associated verbs, experiencer, narrative perspective, and surrounding situation. This approach would allow contextual patterns to be assessed through textual evidence rather than isolated examples.

Conclusion

Emotion-denoting abstract nouns provide a useful basis for investigating the connection between language and emotional experience. Their analysis benefits from combining semantic description with attention to narrative context and communicative purpose. Further corpus-based research could clarify how Uzbek literary discourse represents emotions and uses them to construct character perspectives.

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