

LITERARY DISCOURSE AND THE COMMUNICATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF
CONNOTATION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK TEXTS

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Abstract

This article investigates the notion of literary discourse and the communicative-pragmatic foundations of connotation in English and Uzbek literary texts. Distinguishing text from discourse along eight parameters, it draws on Harris, van Dijk, Ricoeur, Bakhtin, Barthes, Todorov, Lotman and Foucault among foreign scholars and on Safarov and Mahmudov among Uzbek scholars to argue that literary discourse is not merely a sequence of sentences but a socio-communicative process in which the author's knowledge, attitude, worldview and intention to influence the reader are encoded. Within this framework connotation is shown to be one of the principal mechanisms by which the literary text exerts its aesthetic and communicative effect.

Building on Jakobson's six-component model of communication and on the encoding-decoding theory of Hall, the study demonstrates that connotative meaning is transmitted only when author and reader share at least a partly common code, and that the decoding of connotative units depends on the reader's cultural and contextual knowledge. The four traditional discourse types narrative, description, exposition and argument are shown to operate not in pure form but in synthesis, with metaphor and connotation functioning as the semantic mechanism that unites them.

Keywords:

literary discourse, text, connotation, communication, encoding, decoding, discourse types, Jakobson, secondary modelling system.

Introduction

In contemporary linguistics the anthropocentric paradigm has reoriented the study of language towards its interaction with culture, cognition and social practice. Language is no longer regarded solely as a structural system of signs; it is recognised as a dynamic semiotic mechanism embedded within cultural and historical experience. Literary discourse in particular represents a complex cultural space in which national identity, symbolic codes, ethical norms and value orientations are encoded through explicit and implicit semantic structures, and connotation occupies a central position within this space.

The aim of this article is to clarify the relationship between text and literary discourse and to establish the communicative-pragmatic foundations on which connotation is formed. It argues that the difference between text and discourse is not merely terminological but determines how connotative meaning is to be analysed: as a property of the static text, or as a phenomenon produced in the communicative process between author, text and reader.

From Text to Discourse

The term discourse entered linguistics through French and Latin etymological lines and has been applied in linguistics, literary studies, sociology, political science, philosophy and psychology. Its theoretical foundations are associated with Harris's 1952 article and with the



work of van Dijk, Ricoeur and others, while the conception of literary discourse rests on Bakhtin's dialogism, Barthes's theory of the text, Todorov's approach to narrative structure, Lotman's notion of the secondary modelling system and Foucault's theory of discourse. Van Dijk's cognitive perspective and Vinogradov's account of the system of artistic speech further enrich this foundation.

Text and discourse can be distinguished along eight parameters: theoretical position, mode of existence, structural basis, type of meaning, level of analysis, participation of the subject, the time factor, and the aesthetic, cognitive and pragmatic dimensions. Mahmudov regards the literary text as an integral system with an internal structure, in which composition, development, climax and resolution and semantic wholeness operate together, so that every image and detail serves the general idea. Kristeva's notion of intertextuality, in which the literary text is a network composed of other texts and discourses, shows that the text acquires new meanings in different contexts. Literary discourse thus appears not only as a linguistic product but also as a socio-communicative process, and it is precisely this property that makes it one of the principal factors in the formation of connotative meaning.

Communication, Encoding and Decoding

The literary text is not merely a collection of signs but a unique communicative activity between author and reader, in the course of which two layers of information are exchanged: a denotative layer of objective information and a connotative layer of subjective, emotional, evaluative, expressive and stylistic colouring. It is the second layer, connotative meaning, that gives the literary text its aesthetic force and communicative effect. As Barthes observes, denotation is the illusion of connotation, and every literary expression conceals a connotative evaluation.

Jakobson interprets language not as a merely grammatical or nominative system but as a complex communicative mechanism, and explains communication through six components: addresser, addressee, context, contact, code and message. Each component activates a particular function of language, and unless addresser and addressee share at least a partly common code, the semantic and pragmatic layers of the message are not fully decoded. Decoding is the process of recovering and interpreting the meaning concealed in an utterance, in which the reader attends not to the surface grammatical form but to who said something, in what situation and with what intention. As Hall notes, a message can take effect only after it has been meaningfully decoded; a connotative unit therefore reaches the reader only when the cultural and contextual knowledge required to decode it is available, so that the understanding of connotative meaning depends on the integration of the author's encoding and the reader's decoding.

Connotation as a Communicative-Pragmatic Mechanism

Because connotation is realized in the communicative process rather than fixed in the lexicon alone, its analysis must take account of the discourse situation. In a passage from Utkir Hoshimov's *Two Doors* (Ikki eshik orasi), the strong hyperbole in which a character claims to have lived a hundred and fifty years after a hundred and fifty days at war produces a connotative layer in which the figure is not real time but a symbol of suffering and spiritual ageing; the antithesis in which mercy and wrath stand a single step apart conveys that war destroys ordinary ethical measures. Here connotation arises from the interaction of figurative device, syntactic compression and emotional intonation.

Connotation is also bound up with the categorisation of discourse types. A single passage may begin as narrative yet incorporate elements of argument, explanation and description, with metaphor and connotation serving as the semantic mechanism that unites these types. The four discourse types are therefore best treated not as a rigid standardised model but as a conditional classification based on a communicative dominant: in practice they operate not in pure form but



in synthesis, so that a primarily narrative passage is enriched by descriptive, expository and argumentative elements that deepen its semantic and connotative layers.

Discussion

The comparison of text-centred and discourse-centred approaches shows that a purely textual analysis can describe the connotative units present in a passage but cannot account for the conditions under which they are activated. Rusnak observes that contemporary linguistics increasingly analyses discourse rather than the isolated text, since literary discourse operates within a cultural environment and reflects the author's knowledge, attitude and intention to influence the reader. The communicative model adopted here therefore treats connotation as a relation among author, text and reader rather than as a static feature of the lexicon.

This relational view has methodological consequences. If connotative meaning depends on a shared code, then the analysis of connotation must specify the cultural and contextual knowledge presupposed by a given unit, and must recognise that the same unit may be fully realised for one readership and remain opaque for another. The encoding–decoding model thus connects directly to the problems of cross-cultural interpretation and translation that arise when connotative meaning passes between the English and Uzbek literary traditions.

A further implication concerns the status of the four discourse types. If they operate in synthesis rather than in pure form, then the analysis of a literary passage cannot proceed by assigning it to a single type; it must instead identify the communicative dominant and trace how the subordinate types contribute to the connotative layer. Metaphor, on this view, is not an ornament added to a narrative or descriptive base but the semantic mechanism that binds the types together and carries much of the connotative load, which is why figurative analysis and discourse-type analysis must be conducted jointly rather than separately.

Conclusion

Literary discourse, while a linguistic product, also manifests itself as a socio-communicative process, and this property is one of the principal factors in the formation of connotative meaning. The distinction between text and discourse along eight parameters clarifies that connotation is not a static feature of the lexicon but a phenomenon produced in the communicative relationship between author, text and reader. Jakobson's communication model and Hall's encoding–decoding theory establish that connotative meaning is transmitted only when author and reader share at least a partly common code, and that the decoding of connotative units depends on the reader's cultural and contextual knowledge. The four discourse types operate in synthesis rather than in pure form, with metaphor and connotation uniting them, so that connotation functions as a communicative-pragmatic mechanism at the heart of literary discourse.

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