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THE CONCEPT OF LITERARY DISCOURSE AND ITS ROLE IN SHAPING CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN A LITERARY TEXT

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Abstract

This paper examines the concept of literary discourse and its role in generating connotative meaning in a literary text. Drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism, Barthes' distinction between work and text, Todorov's narrative structuralism and Kristeva's intertextuality, the study argues that the four conventional discourse types: narrative, argumentative, descriptive and expository – rarely occur in isolation within a literary text but interweave to produce its connotative depth. This claim is illustrated through an analysis of a passage from Utkir Hoshimov's novel "Ikki eshik orasida", in which narration, argument and metaphorical description combine within a single stretch of inner monologue.

Keywords: Discourse, literary discourse, text linguistics, types of discourse, narrative, argumentative discourse, connotative meaning, dialogism.

The term "discourse", first introduced into linguistics by Z. Harris in his 1952 article "Discourse Analysis", has since become one of the most widely used yet most terminologically unstable notions in contemporary language studies. While in some traditions "text" and "discourse" are treated as synonyms — T. van Dijk and W. Kintsch, for instance, use "discourse" as an equivalent of "connected speech" — in others the two terms are deliberately opposed: "text" is reserved for written communication, "discourse" for oral communication. This terminological



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instability is particularly relevant for the study of literary discourse, since a literary text is never a purely linguistic object: it simultaneously encodes the author's aesthetic intention and the way cultural heritage is refracted through language. Analyzing literary discourse therefore requires attention not only to linguistic form but also to the cultural and social meanings embedded within it, which makes it a rich material for linguo-cultural analysis.

Literary scholars conventionally distinguish four basic types of discourse: argumentative, descriptive, expository and narrative. However, this classification should not be treated as a rigid, mutually exclusive model. In authentic literary texts these types rarely occur in a "pure" form; instead, they interweave within a single passage, and it is precisely this interweaving that enriches the semantic and connotative layer of the text. A narrative may contain descriptive fragments or elements of argument, and it is this synthesis — rather than any single discourse type in isolation — that should be regarded as the norm of literary communication.

Analysis

This claim can be illustrated with a passage from Utkir Hoshimov's novel "Ikki eshik orasida", in which the narrator's inner monologue moves between narration, argument and description within the space of a few sentences: "Katta vijdonsizliklar kichkina nopoklikdan boshlanishini bilsam nima qilay axir?" realizes an argumentative (reasoning) discourse type; "Lekin hammasining oilasi bor, bola-chaqasi bor..." shifts into an expository, explanatory mode; while "Ko'rib ko'nglimning chigili xiyol yozilgandek bo'ldi" relies on a metaphorical, descriptive discourse type. The narrative (narration) frame remains the structural backbone of the passage, yet the argumentative and descriptive fragments significantly deepen its semantic and connotative texture; metaphor and



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connotation function here as the very mechanism that binds the different discourse types into a single coherent whole.

The theoretical picture becomes even richer once discourse is viewed not only as a typology of textual modes but as a communicative and interpretive process. Roland Barthes, distinguishing between the “work” and the “text”, argued that a literary text is a discourse that is constantly rewritten and reshaped: it produces meaning only at the moment of reading, so that meaning itself becomes a discursive act performed by the reader rather than a fixed property deposited in the work by its author. Tzvetan Todorov, by contrast, approached literary discourse from the standpoint of narrative structure, treating the literary text as an organized construction whose plot architecture can be analyzed independently of the reader’s interpretive freedom; his reading of Boccaccio’s “Decameron” exemplifies this structural orientation. Julia Kristeva, developing Bakhtin’s dialogism further, introduced the notion of intertextuality, according to which the semantic structure of a literary text is enriched through overt or covert relations with other texts, so that a literary text is best understood as a network woven out of other texts and discourses rather than as a self-contained unit. These three positions — Barthes’ reader-oriented text, Todorov’s structurally organized narrative, and Kristeva’s intertextual network — do not contradict but complement one another, jointly demonstrating that literary discourse cannot be reduced to a single stable definition and must instead be studied simultaneously at the linguistic, cultural and social levels.

This textual evidence corroborates M. Bakhtin’s dialogic theory of the literary text, according to which a literary text is not a homogeneous stylistic unity but a complex dialogic system formed by the interaction of different social speech layers. Every word carries a historical and social charge, and consequently speech within a literary text is never neutral: it always exists at the boundary between



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“one’s own” and “alien” contexts. From this perspective, literary discourse should be understood not as a static phenomenon but as a continuous clash of meanings, in which discourse types function as the structural vehicles of that dialogism.

Within the analyzed passage from Hoshimov’s novel, this synthesis can be traced at an even finer level of granularity. The narrator’s rhetorical question functions simultaneously as argumentative discourse and as an implicit act of self-accusation, carrying a negative self-evaluative connotation; the enumeration of the neighbours’ family circumstances performs an expository function while at the same time building empathetic connotation toward the people the narrator feels he has wronged; and the metaphor of an “untangling knot” in the heart condenses the emotional resolution of the entire episode into a single descriptive image. None of these three semantic effects could be achieved by a single discourse type in isolation – it is precisely their co-occurrence within one continuous stretch of text that produces the connotative depth of the passage. This confirms that in literary discourse, connotative meaning is not attached to isolated lexical units but emerges at the level of discourse-type interaction.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that literary discourse is best approached not through a rigid typological grid but through the lens of communicative dominance: discourse types combine and interpenetrate within the text, and it is this synthesis that generates the multi-layered, connotatively rich meaning characteristic of literary communication. Understanding this mechanism is a necessary precondition for any subsequent cognitive-pragmatic or comparative analysis of connotative meaning in English and Uzbek literary discourse, since it clarifies at what structural level — narrative, argumentative, descriptive or their synthesis — connotative meaning is generated and conveyed.



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