

The Use Of Agnonyms In Literary Works

Yokubova Shoxida Yusufofva

Lecturer, Department of Uzbek Linguistics and Journalism, Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan

Received: 20 October 2025; **Accepted:** 12 November 2025; **Published:** 17 December 2025

Abstract: Words that exist in usage to a certain extent but are incomprehensible to some speakers of that language; words that are heard by speakers of a language but whose meanings are not fully understood; words whose speakers know that a particular word denotes some kind of object but do not know exactly what it is; and words used in folklore that carry no clear meaning or whose meanings are obscure are considered agnonyms. Writers use agnonymic words in their literary works for various purposes. This article analyzes the agnonymic words used in the comedy “Temir xotin” by the Uzbek playwright Sharof Boshbekov, their characteristics, and the purposes for which they are employed.

Keywords: Agnonyms, rarely used words, historical words, dialectal words, neologism, jargon, argot.

Introduction: As is well known, language is a socio-psychological phenomenon and a means of communication that is understandable to all speakers of that language and used equally by everyone. A language should be comprehensible to all its speakers; however, there are words in every language that are not equally understood by all. These include dialectal words, historical words, neologisms, jargon, argot, and also agnonymic words.

METHOD

The earliest information about agnonymic words emerged in Russian linguistics. The Russian scholar V. V. Morkovkin was the first to provide a definition of agnonyms. According to him, agnonyms are a unified unit of lexical syntax that includes elements of the native language that are unknown, incomprehensible, or only partially understood by the majority of its speakers. According to the scholar, agnonymic words may be perceived by an individual in the following ways:

1. the person does not know the meaning of the word at all;
2. the person assumes that the meaning of the word is broad and related to a specific field;
3. the person knows that the meaning of the word is connected with a specific object but does not know how it differs from other objects;

4. the person knows that the word denotes a certain object but does not know its characteristics, how it is used, or its functions;

5. the person knows what the word means but cannot imagine the appearance of the corresponding object.

Uzbek linguist M. Yoʻldoshev also addressed agnonymic words in his research. He classified types of agnonyms as follows:

1. words that exist to a certain degree in usage but are incomprehensible to speakers of the language, for example *tuvaloq* (*unsa tuvaloq*, *bargi shapaloq*);
2. words that are heard by speakers of the language but whose meanings are not fully understood, such as *barter* and *vayn*;
3. words whose field of usage is known, but whose exact meaning is known only to specialists in that field, such as *ovulation* and *histology*;
4. words whose speakers know that they denote a certain object but do not know exactly what that object is, such as *roboclean* and *blender*;
5. words whose speakers are familiar with their general meaning but cannot clearly explain their specific characteristics, for example, knowing what *MRI* is but being unable to describe its features precisely.

These characteristics are typical of agnonymic words.

In addition, meaningless words used in folklore can also be considered examples of agnonyms:

One pomegranate, two pomegranates,
Three pomegranates — you are just three,
Four pomegranates — you are just four,
Five pomegranates — in the hoop,
The sixth — in the storehouse...
Alagay-palagay,
It flew away and was gone.

In the lines of this poem belonging to children's folklore, the word alagay-palagay carries no lexical meaning and is used solely to ensure rhyme and rhythm. This, too, is considered a type of agnonym.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Everyday spoken language, folklore, and literary works can serve as sources of agnonyms. In the works of Sharof Boshbekov, who occupies a distinctive place in Uzbek literature, agnonyms are also used for various purposes. The playwright's comedy "Temir xotin" is one of the works beloved by the Uzbek people. The play has even been staged in theaters and adapted into a feature film. Let us analyze the agnonyms used in the text of the work.

Olimjon (looking around the yard): Don't be offended, Qo'chqor aka, it's hard for my sister-in-law too. Just look at the situation: still a stove, still dung is being burned. There is no progress.

Qo'chqor: What-gres?

Olimjon: Progress. Development.

Qo'chqor: There is progress. In the past we burned dung, now we burn dung with diesel fuel. It burns well. True, the food smells a bit, but people get used to it.

Olimjon: In a way it's hard for you too, with so many children... but never mind. Qo'chqor aka, everything will be fine soon. You see, now there's this idea called "family planning."

Qo'chqor: What-planning?

Olimjon: Planning. It means that in order to live well, one should not have more than three or four children.

Through the dialogue between a scientist engaged in technology and a representative of ordinary people—a tractor driver—the writer attempts to demonstrate the differences in linguistic competence, communicative ability, and intellectual level of two individuals who speak the same language. The author uses agnonyms so skillfully that after each agnonymic word, its synonym or explanation is provided. The word progress, used in Olimjon's speech, is completely incomprehensible to the second speaker. The character

has heard the word planning but does not know its exact meaning. Because of this lack of understanding, he repeats Olimjon's words in distorted forms such as what-gres and what-planning. This creates a light humorous effect for the reader. Thus, these words function as agnonyms for certain members of society.

Olimjon: Yes, you've ruined everything! My sister-in-law did the right thing by leaving—any woman who falls into your hands is bound to perish! Are you an out-and-out feudal lord?

Qo'chqor: What-dal?

Olimjon: Feudal! You put that poor woman through unspeakable suffering! What hardships she endured here! You mercilessly exploited her!

Qo'chqor: What-ploitation?

Olimjon: Exploitation! She worked nonstop from morning till night! Not a single minute of rest, poor thing, not a single minute! Washing, cleaning, sewing, mending, sweeping! Carrying water from a kilometer away to do the laundry! Cooking food on that cursed stove that burns dung! You've got insatiable livestock—feeding grass, fodder, water all day long! Kneading dough, milking cows, churning butter! Does the work in this house ever end?!

The word feudal used in the text is defined in The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language edited by A. Madvaliyev and D. Xudoyberganova as "a representative of the ruling class during the feudal era—a large landowner, landlord." There are words in a language that, for speakers of a certain period, function as agnonyms whose meanings are not fully understood. For today's reader, the word feudal is archaic and its meaning may not be completely clear. Likewise, newly borrowed words entering the language may remain agnonyms for certain individuals for a period of time.

In addition, the word kuvi used in the text can also function as an agnonym for speakers of the language. In The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, kuvi is defined as "a long cylindrical wooden vessel with a thick-ended stick, used for churning milk to obtain butter," and the phrase kuvi pishmoq is defined as "to process milk in a churn to extract butter." This word may also be considered a regional agnonym, since dialectal words are understood only by speakers of a particular region, while for speakers of other regions they remain obscure and function as agnonyms.

Let us consider another excerpt from the comedy:

Saltanat: Hey, young man! Come out—don't let people say you ran away from your wife! Is a man with a belt around his waist turning into an anqo's seed or what nonsense is this? Come on, hurry up, there's no time!

In this passage, the word anqo is defined in The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language as “a mythical bird that has a name but no physical existence (supposedly the king of birds living on Mount Qof).” Not all Uzbek speakers have heard of the anqo bird, and even those who have may not know what kind of bird it is or what characteristics it possesses. Thus, this word also qualifies as an agnonym.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, words that exist to some extent in usage but are incomprehensible to certain speakers of the language; words that are heard by speakers but whose meanings are not fully understood; words whose speakers know that they denote some object but do not know exactly what it is; and meaningless or obscure words used in folklore are considered agnomyns. Writers employ agnonymic words in their literary works for various artistic and communicative purposes.

REFERENCES

1. Akhmedov, A. R., & Yokubova, S. Y. (2021). On the role of creative activities in mother tongue textbooks for Uzbek classes in the development of students' thinking. *Current Research Journal of Pedagogics*, 2(5), 124–127.
2. Boshbekov, S. (n.d.). *Temir xotin*. Ziyouz electronic library.
3. Khojiev, M. Y., & Yokubova, S. Y. (2021). Language and speech expression of personal descriptions. *TJE – Thematics Journal of Education*, ISSN 2249-9822.
4. Lipnina, E. M. (2012). *Antropotsentricheskaya sushchnost' agnomimov* [Anthropocentric essence of agnomyns]. Psychology, Sociology and Pedagogy, Moscow.
5. Morkovkin, V. V., & Morkovkina, A. V. (1997). *Russkie agnomimy: Slova, kotorye my ne znaem. Ponyatie, sostav i smyslovoe raznoobrazie* [Russian agnomyns: Words we do not know. Concept, composition, and semantic diversity]. Moscow.
6. Yokubova, S. Y. (2025, June). Qanday soʻzlarni agnomim deya olamiz? [Which words can be considered agnomyns?]. *Academic Research in Modern Science*. International scientific-online conference.
7. Yokubova, S. Y., & Nurboyeva, M. V. Q. (2021). Ona tili taʼlimida assotsiatsiya va kognitiv-pragmatik yondashuvning oʻrni. *Scientific Progress*, 1(5), 783–787.
8. Yokubova, S. Y. (2025). Xalq poetik nutqida agnomimlarning qoʻllanishi. *Bukhara State University Scientific Bulletin*, 5, 191–195.
9. Yoʻldoshev, M. (2008). *Badiiy matnning lisoniy tahlili* [Linguistic analysis of literary text]. Tashkent.
10. Oʻzbek tilining izohli lugʻati [Explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language] (Vols. 1–2). (2022). Tashkent: Gʻafur Gʻulom Publishing House.