

The Use Of Nostalgic Lexical Items In Fiction

Xayitova Rushana

Lecturer at the Denau Institute Of Entrepreneurship And Pedagogy, Denau, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article examines the use of nostalgic lexical units in fiction and analyzes their functional-semantic, axiological, and psycholinguistic characteristics. Nostalgic units are linguistic means that evoke warm and joyful memories of the past in human consciousness, thereby enhancing the emotional impact of a literary text. Using Utkir Hoshimov's *Dunyoning ishlari* as the primary material, the study explores the functions of nostalgic lexical units in the text and their artistic-aesthetic load. The article also considers issues arising in translation, including cultural differences, and offers an analysis based on a linguocultural approach.

Keywords: Nostalgic lexis, fiction, semantic analysis, axiology, psycholinguistics, linguoculture, translation issues, emotional impact, Utkir Hoshimov, *Dunyoning ishlari*.

Introduction: Nostalgic lexical units represent a set of words and expressions that evoke warm and joyful recollections of earlier times in the human mind. These units belong to the emotional-semantic layer of the language system and reflect feelings associated with the past. From a linguistic perspective, they are closely connected with linguocultural studies, psycholinguistics, and semantics; studying them helps to explain the complex relationship between language and culture. In particular, the communicative functions and axiological dimensions of such units require targeted semantic analysis.

Nostalgic lexical units are widely used in fiction, endowing the text with semantic depth, emotional resonance, and stylistic expressiveness. Authors employ these linguistic means to convey longing for the past, childhood memories, family values, and cultural traditions. In particular, Utkir Hoshimov's *Dunyoning ishlari* features extensive nostalgic depictions associated with childhood, familial warmth, the image of the mother, and rural life. This article investigates, through linguistic analysis, the functional-semantic features of nostalgic lexical units used in the work and their role in the literary text.

The study was conducted within a qualitative framework using methods of semantic analysis, discourse analysis, comparative analysis, and psycholinguistic analysis.

The findings show that nostalgic lexical units constitute one of the key means of semantic and emotional loading in a literary text [1: p. 29]; they not only express warm memories of the past but also enrich the axiological content of the text. Analysis based on Utkir Hoshimov's *Dunyoning ishlari* demonstrates that nostalgic units are mainly used in connection with childhood, family values, traditional ways of life, and cultural elements that are gradually disappearing. These units enhance the expressive and stylistic qualities of the text and exert a strong emotional influence on the reader.

In this work, nostalgic lexical units play an important role in representing childhood memories, vanishing values, and familial affection. The following excerpt clearly illustrates this:

"In the yard, the old mulberry tree that used to grow by the irrigation ditch is gone now. My dear father planted it when I was a child. Every spring its leaves would rustle, and pigeons would perch on its low branches. Chasing them away used to bring us joy. But now both our yard and our childhood are left behind..."

In this passage, lexical units such as "the old mulberry tree," "pigeons would perch," and "our childhood is left behind" evoke warm memories of the past and intensify the nostalgic effect. Here, "the old mulberry tree" conveys the passing of childhood while also

symbolizing disappearing family values and a traditional way of life. The phrase “pigeons would perch” can be understood as a symbol of lost peace and tranquility.

From an axiological perspective, these units are associated with notions such as idealizing the past and recognizing simplicity and kindness as values. According to Svetlana Boym’s theory of nostalgia, this excerpt contains elements of restorative nostalgia—reflecting a desire to return to the past and restore it [3]. However, in other parts of the text one can also observe features of reflective nostalgia, for example:

“The world has changed. The children we used to play with together in our yard when we were young have become strangers to us...”

This serves to introduce a critical взгляд at the past and to express the tension between modernity and tradition.

The nostalgic lexical units in Utkir Hoshimov’s *Dunyoning ishlari* are largely linked with childhood memories, disappearing values, and changes in human relationships. This is clearly confirmed by the following excerpt:

“My mother still kept that old tray with great care. There were also the porcelain teacups my father used to pour tea into when I was a child. Even though their rims were slightly chipped, my mother would never throw them away. ‘This is a keepsake from your father,’ she would say every time she handed them to me. Now my mother is gone too, and our home is no longer what it used to be...”

In this excerpt, expressions such as “the old tray,” “porcelain teacups,” “a keepsake from your father,” and “our home is no longer what it used to be” function as nostalgic lexical units. Along with evoking warm memories of the past, they also depict disappearing traditions and family values.

Semantic analysis shows that these units are rich in connotation and perform functions such as creating emotional harmony, idealizing the past, and representing cultural values. In particular, the images of “porcelain teacups” and “the old tray” play an important role in conveying ideas about the transience of life, changing traditions, and the enduring vitality of human memory.

An analysis based on Svetlana Boym’s theory of nostalgia [3] indicates that this excerpt combines elements of restorative and reflective nostalgia:

- Restorative nostalgia is associated with the desire to return to the past and reconstruct it. For instance, the mother’s careful preservation of the porcelain teacups and her calling them “a keepsake

from your father” reflect an intention to value and safeguard the past.

- Reflective nostalgia involves a critical, philosophical contemplation of the past. Expressions such as “Now my mother is gone too, and our home is no longer what it used to be” point to life’s mutability and to how values change over time, expressing a reflective awareness of the gap between the past and the present.

The results of the analysis show that the nostalgic lexis in the work reflects not only longing for the past, but also a person’s emotional and axiological attitude toward a changing life. Therefore, in translation it is important to preserve their meaning, take cultural differences into account, and avoid losing the text’s affective force.

In the analyzed work, nostalgic lexical units are closely connected with a traditional way of life, family values, and rural experience. The following excerpt confirms this idea:

“When there was a wedding in our village, everyone would bring a bowl of rice and a handful of raisins from home. Around the cauldron the grandmothers would chat while cooking pilaf. Even the taste of the pilaf back then was different. Now everything is bought, and instead of grandmothers cooking, restaurant chefs are in charge.”

In this excerpt, expressions such as “when there was a wedding in our village,” “the grandmothers would chat while cooking pilaf,” and “the taste of the pilaf back then was different” function as Uzbek nostalgic lexis. These units reflect values such as rural life, traditional hospitality, and communal solidarity, and they evoke a sense of longing for customs that are gradually disappearing.

From a comparative perspective, such units differ from nostalgic expressions in English. For instance, nostalgia in English is more often associated with personal experience, urban culture, and technological development. The following example from English-language literature illustrates this:

“I remember the old days when kids played outside until dark, riding their bikes through the streets. Now, everyone is glued to their screens, and the streets feel empty.”

In this text, the phrases “kids played outside until dark” and “riding their bikes through the streets” convey a nostalgic attitude toward changes in urban life. While nostalgia in the Uzbek excerpt is tied to rural living and traditional rituals, the English example relates to a simple childhood urban routine and the impact of technology on human relationships.

Aspects that require attention in translation include:

The Uzbek expression “qozon boshida momolar guring qilib osh damlashardi” is difficult to translate literally into English, because in English-speaking cultures the preparation of *osh* (pilaf) is not typically associated with that kind of collective, ritualized communal setting.

In English it may be rendered as: “Back in the day, family members would gather in the kitchen, chatting while preparing meals together.” This conveys the communal significance of cooking in Uzbek culture.

The phrase “Endi esa hamma narsa sotib olinadi, osh damlayotgan momolar o’rnida esa restoran oshpazlari turibdi” is closer to English nostalgia about modern change; it can be expressed as: “Nowadays, everything is store-bought, and instead of grandmothers cooking, we have professional chefs in fancy restaurants.”

This analysis demonstrates that nostalgic lexical units in Uzbek and English are culturally grounded; therefore, translation must take into account not only lexical equivalents, but also context and cultural differences.

In this work, nostalgic lexis has a strong impact on human memory and emotional state. The following excerpt provides a vivid example:

“My grandfather would step into the yard early every morning and breathe in the smell of the earth. That scent could never be mistaken for anything else. Then he would sprinkle water in the yard and sweep it clean. His habit felt natural to us as well. But now our yard is gone. My grandfather is gone too. And the morning scent of the soil remains only in memories.”

In this text, expressions such as “My grandfather would step into the yard early every morning and breathe in the smell of the earth” and “he would sprinkle water in the yard and sweep it clean” function as nostalgic units closely tied to memory and emotion. These images reflect not only personal recollection but also longing for a traditional lifestyle and the habits of an older generation.

From a psycholinguistic viewpoint, nostalgic lexis helps the reader connect the text with their own personal memories. For example, the phrase “My grandfather would step into the yard early every morning and breathe in the smell of the earth” evokes emotional resonance linked to childhood memories, family values, and generational continuity. The sentence “But now our yard is gone. My grandfather is gone too” intensifies the pain of loss and the desire to return to the past.

Thus, the use of nostalgic units in literary texts can create resonance with the reader’s lived experience and produce a deep psychological effect. For this

reason, nostalgia functions as a powerful expressive device in fiction, capable of eliciting an immediate emotional response from the reader.

The analysis also indicates that nostalgic lexical units are among the key means of carrying semantic and emotional weight in fiction. They not only recall memories of the past, but also enrich the axiological content of the text, helping it align with the reader’s emotional experience [2]. Using Utkir Hoshimov’s *Dunyoning ishlari* as an example, such units are connected with childhood memories, family values, and cultural elements that are gradually disappearing, thereby strengthening the text’s expressive impact. Psycholinguistically, they allow the reader to relate the narrative to personal memories; axiologically, they encourage the idealization of the past and the preservation of cultural heritage.

In sum, the use of nostalgic lexical units in fiction amplifies the emotional impact of the text and helps establish an affective connection with the reader.

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