

Interpretation of Figurative Meanings in Uzbek Proverbs with the "Hospitality" Concept

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Abstract: The national values, traditions, customs, and social environment of every nation are vividly expressed in its oral folklore. This is because a nation's oral folklore not only displays its social values, but also artistically and logically reflects its culture, origins, way of life, psyche, and consciousness. Proverbs, in particular, are monuments that reflect the wisdom of the people and their national traditions and customs. One of the most ancient and enduring values of the Uzbek people is hospitality, which is considered a fundamental element of their social experience, worldview, national culture, and moral norms. In proverbs, this concept is expressed not only directly but also through figurative meanings. The purpose of this research is to identify the semantic and pragmatic features of the concept of hospitality in Uzbek proverbs and to demonstrate how they are interpreted through figurative language.

Keywords: Lexico-semantic pragmatic interpretation, lexical analysis, artistic interpretation, symbolic interpretation, linguoculturology, expressiveness, folklore, figurative language, proverbs, concept of hospitality.

Introduction: The Uzbek people are renowned worldwide for their hospitality and generosity. This quality dates back to ancient roots and is clearly manifested in literature and oral folklore. In the ancient mentality, a guest is held in high esteem, occupying a special place in national identity, rules of etiquette, and artistic works. The concept of "hospitality" is widely expressed in folk proverbs, through which the worldview, values, and social relations of the people are reflected. The purpose of the research is to analyze the semantic features of the "hospitality" concept in Uzbek proverbs and the mechanisms by which they acquire figurative meaning.

METHOD

Language is the most important factor expressing the culture, values, and beliefs of each nation - in short, the characteristics of the nation as a whole. The formation of each new paradigm in linguistics is also leading to a broader study of proverbs. This, in turn, is making a

significant contribution to the development of paremiology. According to N.F. Alefirenko, the approach of linking paremia to the general phraseological fund of a dialect is highly controversial, as paremia combines features of both sentences and free combinations. The term "paremia" is understood by many analysts as the ethnography of "societal origins, primarily maxims and proverbs."

With the development of linguistics, the deepening of research into the issue of the speech-specific manifestations of linguistic potential, and the formation of Uzbek stylistics as a distinct linguistic field, the stylistic characteristics of folk proverbs began to be studied in depth. This research also extended to the functional potential and features of proverbs that are characteristic of and adapted to the individual idiolects of Uzbek writers. In this regard, the research by S. Mirzaev, S. Askarov, A. Jurakhonov, M. Tuychiev, M. Hakimov, and other linguists has made a notable contribution to the linguistic study of Uzbek proverbs.

"A proverb arises out of the necessity of a certain period, a specific situation, space, and time. However, it never remains confined to the meaning of the time in which it was created, born, or uttered. It is continually renewed according to the context and content of its use in speech. This demonstrates that proverbs are always in step with the present" (Mirzaev, A. Musakulov, Sarimsokov, 1987: 8).

The cognitive linguistics movement, which emerged at the end of the 20th century, explains the concept as the fundamental unit expressing a people's cultural worldview (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As A. Wierzbicka (1997) notes, the language of every nation expresses the values of that nation through its "cultural code words."

In modern linguistics, the term "concept" has emerged to denote the connections between the general and specific meanings of a word as formed through human experience. The structure of a concept has the same features as a lexico-semantic field:

1. Core (Nucleus). This is the main layer that unites cognitive layers or segments, forming common cognitive features. 2. Periphery. This is the interpretive (synonymous) field of the concept. According to the Russian scholar V.A. Litvinov, such lexical units were initially considered to be words; later, they came to include phrases and expressions as well.

- All lexical units united under the concept of hospitality form a common semantic field. The core of this field, which constitutes the main layer, brings together proverbs of this type. This creates a semantic commonality, enabling the interpretation of all meaning types through component analysis.

- Various figurative transfers are also found in proverbs with the concept of hospitality.

- The figurative expression of hospitality in proverbs

- In Uzbek linguistics (Ahmedov, 1991; Safarov, 2006; Karimov, 2015), it is noted that figurative meaning arises through the following devices:

- Metaphor: (figurative transfer) Guest → blessing, light, adornment.

- Metonymy: (transfer based on association) House → societal life; Guest → vitality.

- Synecdoche (transfer between whole and part)

- Symbol: Guest → humanity, generosity, faith.
- Parallelism: "When a guest arrives, wealth arrives" ↔ "If no guest comes, the house is like a tomb."

1. Direct expression

- "A place for a guest is a place from paradise."
- "When a guest arrives, fortune arrives."
- In these proverbs, the guest is presented directly as a symbol of blessing and prosperity.

2. Metaphorical Meanings

- "A guest is the ornament of your home."
- → Here, the guest is depicted as an ornament, a source of light. The arrival of a guest beautifies the life of the household.
- "If no guest comes, the house is like a grave."
- → House = life, guest = vitality. The absence of a guest symbolizes the fading of life.

3. Symbolic Interpretation

- "A guest is greater than your father."
- → The guest is revered, and the respect shown to them is placed even higher than that for one's own father. This reflects the religious and moral values of the people. This also relates to physical placement; while a father is great and his place is always high, if a guest arrives, they are given a seat of honor even higher than the father's.

4. Contrasting Images

- "The one with a narrow heart for a guest has dark eyes."
- → A person who dislikes guests has a dark heart, meaning a narrow worldview.
- "One who shows kindness to a guest will find fortune."
- → Generosity and hospitality bring material and spiritual blessings.

- Through figurative meanings, the concept of the guest is interpreted not only as a social phenomenon but also as a cultural and religious value. In proverbs, the concept of hospitality is enriched precisely through these methods.

It appears that the qualities of hospitality and honoring guests are deeply rooted in history. This concept

embodies a positive context, combining all virtuous traits. In "Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk," various synonyms for the word "mehmon" (guest) are also provided. For instance, the saying "umma keldi, qut keldi," which means "a guest has arrived, blessings and happiness have arrived." However, some proverbs, while expressing the etiquette of hospitality, also carry a negative connotation.

A guest's stay stinks after three days.

An uninvited guest is worse than a yellow dog.

An ill-mannered guest imposes on the host.

An uninvited guest is like an uncarved stick.

A guest does not love another guest, and the host loves none of them.

A. Ahmedov (1991): In proverbs, hospitality functions as a metaphorical symbol that expresses the moral ideals of a people.

Sh. Safarov (2006): Concepts are a product of national thought, and the "guest" concept reflects the social identity of the Uzbeks.

Anna Wierzbicka (1997): The word "guest" exists as a positive concept in many cultures, but each language offers its own unique interpretation.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980): Metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of folk thought; the metaphor of guest → blessing is universal in proverbs.

D. Yo'ldoshev (2012): In Uzbek proverbs, the guest is often used in symbolic connection with "blessing" (baraka) and "light" (nur).

In Uzbek proverbs, the guest is consistently depicted as a symbol of blessing, wealth, light, and happiness. Such views are inextricably linked to the religious and social worldviews of the people.

The etymology of the word *mehmon* (guest) traces back to the Persian adjective *meh*, meaning "great." The present tense form *man* of the verb *manestan*, meaning "to resemble," was added to this adjective, forming the words *mehman* or *muhman*. These forms originally meant "a person of great stature" (O'TEL, III, 136). Sh. Rahmatullayev asserts that the lexeme *mezbon* (host) is formed from *miz* (a low table on which a tablecloth is spread) and the suffix *-bon*, which means "to look after" (O'TEL, III, 136).

According to D. Edelman, the word *mehman* was formed by adding the component **pā*, meaning "to guard, protect, care for," to the word *mēz* / *myz*, which means "a meal at which sacrificial products are consumed," "a feast," or "a spread cloth." (Edelman D. Moscow. 2010.)

Among the Uzbek people, the guest has been revered since ancient times. In his *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, Mahmud Kashgari writes that the Turkic peoples considered a guest a divine gift and a blessing upon the household. V.V. Bartold, while studying the history of the Turkic peoples, also noted the guest as "an element that brings prestige and happiness to the host."

In the Avesta, an important written source on the religious and spiritual life of the peoples of ancient Iran and Central Asia, the concept of the guest is also interpreted in connection with social relations between people and the values of respect and hospitality. Receiving a guest and showing them respect is depicted as the highest duty: "Ahura Mazda commands people to welcome a guest and care for them, for the guest is a symbol of prosperity and blessing. The grace of God descends upon the homes that honor their guests" (Yasna 16.3).

Respecting guests and treating them well is considered a religious duty. In the Holy Qur'an, there are also verses in Surah Al-Hijr, Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave), and Surah An-Nur that state the necessity of showing honor and respect to guests. Surah Al-Kahf Cave;

Hospitality is a socio-moral value of the Uzbek mentality. Although values manifest in various forms, linguistic material is the most crucial for their analysis. For this reason, in conceptual analysis, the "from the semantics of linguistic units to the concept" approach is considered the most reliable method.

CONCLUSION

In Uzbek proverbs, the concept of "hospitality" is a central value that reflects the nation's cultural and national perspectives. Through figurative language, this concept is enriched by metaphor, symbolism, parallelism, and metonymy, demonstrating the artistic and logical power of the people's mindset. In comparison, hospitality is also valued by other cultures, but in Uzbek proverbs, it is further deepened by a national spirit and a religious-moral interpretation.

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