

PSYCHOLINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE GENDER CONCEPT: LINGUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE PERCEPTION OF LITERARY TEXTS

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Abstract

This article examines the psycholinguistic realization of the gender concept in Uzbek literary texts and its relationship with linguistic consciousness, attention, sensory-perceptual representation, emotional-axiological evaluation, memory, inner speech, and the perception of literary characters. Gender meaning is interpreted not as a fixed and immutable set of psychological qualities, but as a context-dependent meaning formed through the interaction of a specific literary situation, a character's communicative behavior, and verbal and non-verbal signals. Selected passages from Said Ahmad's "Ufq", Qo'chqor Norqobil's "Osmon ostidagi sir", Ulug'bek Hamdam's "Uzoqdagi Dilnura", and Cho'lpon's "Kecha va kunduz" are analyzed to identify the psycholinguistic mechanisms involved. The findings show that laughter, crying, silence, facial expression, or firmness should not automatically be interpreted as stable gender markers; rather, their meaning is determined by context, the affective situation, plot development, and interpersonal relations between characters.

Keywords: gender concept, psycholinguistics, linguistic consciousness, literary text, character, sensory-perceptual representation, inner speech, emotional-axiological evaluation, gender stereotype, cognitive poetics.

Introduction

Literary texts bring to the fore complex perceptual processes associated with human verbal-cognitive activity. For this reason, explaining the gender concept solely through lexical units referring to women and men or through ready-made

stereotypes does not fully reveal the semantic potential of a literary text. From a psycholinguistic perspective, primary attention is paid to how a literary device directs attention, activates mental imagery, generates emotional-axiological evaluation, connects with memory, and organizes the perception of relationships among characters.

In her study of Uzbek communicative texts, F. S. Karimova demonstrates the role of the linguistic repertoire and linguistic consciousness in speech production and perception. Sh. Usmonova and Sh. Shamsiyeva identify the language-and-thought activity of both the text producer and the recipient as a central issue in psycholinguistic analysis. Therefore, when analyzing gender meaning in a literary text, it is important to distinguish among the levels of the author, the character, and the potential addressee.

The aim of the study is to identify the psycholinguistic realization of the gender concept in Uzbek literary texts and to systematize the principal perceptual and communicative factors that shape it. The research material consists of the literary passages analyzed in the source material. The main methods include contextual-semantic analysis, psycholinguistic interpretation, and cognitive-poetic interpretation.

Main Body

Gender Concept and Linguistic Consciousness

The concept of linguistic consciousness does not imply that a literary unit is stored with the same pre-formed psychological content for all addressees. A full interpretation becomes possible only when a literary device interacts with an individual's linguistic experience, cultural knowledge, cognitive memory, and communicative experience. Although the mental lexicon is one of the lexical-representational foundations of this process, literary perception extends far beyond relations among words.

In a literary text, silence, bodily movement, space, objects, intonation, and other non-verbal signs also participate in meaning-making. Therefore, in the psycholinguistic interpretation of the gender concept, what matters is not only the lexical meaning of a particular unit, but also the perceptual possibilities it creates in a specific situation. A character's gender-related view should not be treated as

the author's judgment or as a ready-made rule representing an entire national culture.

Within cognitive poetics, P. Stockwell relates the perception of literary texts to attention, deixis, contextual knowledge, and the gradual construction of a mental model. J. Gavins's Text World Theory likewise helps explain the cognitive organization of literary texts through linguistic means. These theoretical perspectives are important not for predetermining a reader's response, but for explaining how a text directs attention and what kinds of knowledge and signals it may activate.

Core Mechanisms of Psycholinguistic Realization

The psycholinguistic realization of the gender concept in a literary text may conventionally be represented through the following chain: literary device -> attention -> sensory representation -> emotional-axiological evaluation -> connection with memory -> perception of characters -> contextual interpretation. This sequence is not a rigid step-by-step model of actual mental processes; rather, it is a methodological scheme used to distinguish different analytical factors.

In sensory-perceptual representation, visual, acoustic, spatial, and kinesthetic units provide a linguistic basis for mental interpretation. L. W. Barsalou's concept of grounded cognition makes it possible to view conceptual processing in relation to modal representations associated with perceptual and motor systems. Applied to literary texts, descriptions of body posture, movement, sound, temperature, or space can help concretize a character's psychological state.

Emotional-axiological evaluation is likewise not the sole source of gender meaning. Laughter may be associated with joy, resentment, nervousness, or an attempt to conceal inner distress, while crying may express grief, relief, excitement, or affection. Therefore, direct equations such as "laughter = femininity", "crying = weakness", or "firmness = masculinity" oversimplify literary meaning.

Literary Character Speech and Gender Meaning

In Said Ahmad's novel "Ufq" ("Horizon"), Risolat's arrival to see Dildor is portrayed through mood, facial expression, and verbal activity even before the conversation itself begins. Expressions such as "Og'zi to'la kulgi" ("her mouth

full of laughter"), "bir gapirib o'n kular" ("she would say one thing and laugh ten times"), "gina" ("resentment"), "lablarining burilishi" ("the curling of her lips"), and "javray-javray" ("grumbling repeatedly") help represent the character's communicative state not in a one-dimensional way, but as the simultaneous presence of joy and resentment.

In this example, repeated verbs and converbal constructions shape the rhythm of speech, while "lablarining burilishi" ("the curling of the lips") demonstrates how resentment is expressed through a concrete facial movement. Importantly, this speech-specific feature should not be generalized into stereotypes such as "women talk a lot" or "women laugh a lot". It is the specific communicative style of a particular linguistic personality.

In Qo'chqor Norqobil's story "Osmon ostidagi sir" ("The Secret Under the Sky"), Xayriniso's reaction after receiving good news about her daughter also demonstrates the complexity of emotional processing. The character's haste, her excited responses to congratulations, and her simultaneous laughter and tears illustrate the interrelationship among emotion, attention, and movement. In combination with situational factors such as her maternal role, her daughter's achievement, and the attention of the community, this scene produces gender-related meaning.

Inner Speech, Silence, and Gender Stereotypes

The telephone conversation between Sanam and Kozimjon in Ulug'bek Hamdam's story "Uzoqdagi Dilnura" ("Dilnura in the Distance") helps reveal the psycholinguistic nature of gender stereotypes. Sanam's complaint beginning with "Erkak zoti..." ("Men...") and Kozimjon's internally expressed dissatisfaction in the form "ayol zoti..." ("Women...") may appear to be general judgments; however, their meaning emerges within the affective background of the immediate conflict.

Inner speech places within the text an evaluation that the character does not fully articulate in external communication. Later, when Kozimjon tells his wife Mahzuna about the death of his uncle, Mahzuna's silence and the description of her voice as "siniqqan" ("broken" or "fractured") limit the earlier generalization about "women" from within the text itself. In this way, the differing emotional

and verbal behaviors of individual characters prevent the stereotype from becoming a universal judgment.

Silence is likewise not a univocal signal. It may signify distress, hopelessness, grief, consent, resistance, or withdrawal from communication. Its gender-related meaning becomes clearer only in relation to who remains silent toward whom, in what situation, and alongside what other actions.

Sensory Representation and Spatial Context

In Cho'lpon's novel "Kecha va kunduz" ("Night and Day"), Zebi's psychological state is depicted together with spring, expansiveness, and movement. The opening of her "Qish ichi siqilib, zanglab chiqqan ko'ngli" (approximately, "a heart that had grown constricted and rusted through the winter") under the warm breath of spring combines the oppositions winter-spring, cold-warmth, enclosed-open space, and constriction-expansion.

In the subsequent context, it is noted that the visits of marriage suitors have ceased and that the sound of the outer door no longer startles Zebi as it once did. Therefore, her desire for open space should not be interpreted merely as a general "woman's natural desire for freedom", but in relation to the specific social situation of a young girl and the relief that follows prolonged psychological tension. Thus, the convergence of external space and inner state forms the basis for sensory-perceptual representation.

Analytical Model and Discussion

In the examples examined, psycholinguistic mechanisms do not operate in isolation; several mechanisms intersect within a single scene. In the case of Risolat, speech rhythm interacts with facial expression; in Xayriniso's case, affective state interacts with attention and movement; in the episode involving Kozimjon, inner speech interacts with interpersonal relations; and in the scene concerning Zebi, psychological state interacts with sensory space. This demonstrates that the gender concept cannot be reduced to "emotional impact" alone.

The distinction between an associative approach and psycholinguistic interpretation is also evident here. An associative dictionary records existing responses to a particular stimulus and their frequency. However, the function of

a unit in a specific literary context may vary according to plot, character perspective, and emotional situation. Thus, although associative results and the perceptual possibilities created by a literary text may be related, they are not identical phenomena.

Literary signal	Psycholinguistic mechanism	Contextual factor	Interpretive outcome
Speech rhythm and facial expression	Attention, sensory representation	Interpersonal closeness	Individual communicative style
Laughter and crying	Emotional-affective activation	Maternal role and situation	Complex emotional state
Inner speech	Evaluation and memory	Conflictual relationship	Situational stereotype
Silence and voice	Affective perception	Loss or distress	Context-dependent meaning
Space and movement	Sensory-kinesthetic representation	Social pressure	Psychological relief / striving

Practical Stages of Analysis

A five-stage practical model is proposed for the psycholinguistic analysis of gender meaning in literary texts. At the first stage, the literary signal related to gender and the character to whom it belongs are identified. At the second stage, the signal is classified as verbal, non-verbal, affective, or relatively stable in nature. At the third stage, the potential mental representation activated by the signal is determined. At the fourth stage, the interpretation is delimited by interpersonal relations among characters and by the literary context. At the fifth stage, the analysis checks that the evidence obtained is not generalized beyond the individual character without sufficient textual basis.

This model helps prevent a literary text from being reduced to a catalogue of stereotypes. Distinguishing the source, function, and context of each signal makes it possible to avoid equating the author's artistic choice, the character's linguistic personality, and the perception of the potential addressee.

Conclusion

The psycholinguistic interpretation of the gender concept in Uzbek literary texts is based not on treating female and male characters as lists of pre-existing

psychological qualities, but on identifying how gender-related meanings are formed in specific communicative and perceptual situations. The passages analyzed demonstrate the interconnection of speech, silence, inner speech, facial expression, kinesthetic movement, sensory space, affective tension, and emotional evaluation.

According to the findings, laughter, crying, silence, or firmness cannot automatically be regarded as stable gender markers. Their meaning is determined by the identity of the character, the character's relationship with others, the affective nature of the situation, and the function of the relevant sign within the plot. In this respect, the psycholinguistic analysis of the gender concept extends beyond lexical meaning and integrates attention, mental representation, emotional-axiological evaluation, memory, and contextual perception.

Distinguishing the linguistic personalities of the author, character, and addressee as separate analytical levels also helps identify more precisely the source of gender-related judgments in a literary text. Thus, the psycholinguistic approach emerges as an effective analytical framework for revealing the situational, variable, and semantic nature of the gender concept.

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