



FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF INTENSIFIERS IN LITERARY DISCOURSE: LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF INTENSIFICATION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative analysis of the functional-semantic and linguocultural characteristics of intensifiers employed in English and Uzbek literary discourse. The study investigates the semantic structure, communicative functions, and national-cultural peculiarities of lexical, phraseological, metaphorical, and pragmatic intensifiers. Furthermore, based on the monographs, dissertations, and scholarly investigations of both foreign and local researchers, the mechanisms of expressing intensity in literary discourse are elucidated.

Keywords: intensification, literary discourse, linguoculturology, semantics, pragmatics, expressiveness, evaluation, concept, metaphor, intensifier.

In contemporary linguistics, literary discourse is interpreted as a linguistic manifestation of human cognition, culture, and emotional experience. Literary texts not only fulfill aesthetic functions but also embody national worldviews, systems of values, and cultural concepts. From this perspective, the category of intensification constitutes one of the most significant functional-semantic components of literary discourse. Intensifiers serve to reinforce the author's evaluative attitude, depict the emotional states of characters, and enhance the pragmatic impact of the text.

In his seminal work *Degree Words*, D. Bolinger interprets intensifiers not merely as indicators of degree but as linguistic devices expressing the emotional energy of speech. According to the scholar, "intensifiers are signals of the speaker's emotional commitment" (Bolinger, 1972, p. 18). This approach reveals not only the semantic functions of intensifiers but also their pragmatic and emotional dimensions.

The cognitive linguist G. Lakoff emphasizes the conceptual nature of human cognition and associates the category of intensity with human experience. According to him, "categories are grounded in bodily and cultural experience" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 284). Consequently, linguistic units expressing intensity reflect not only individual experiences but also collective cultural experiences.

In her doctoral dissertation, C. Paradis analyzes degree modifiers and demonstrates the evaluative and expressive functions of intensifiers. She characterizes such units as *absolutely*, *completely*, and *totally* as markers of maximal degree (Paradis, 1997, p. 79). These units are particularly significant in literary texts, where they contribute to the representation of characters' psychological states.

English literature widely employs intensifiers such as *very*, *absolutely*, *terribly*, *incredibly*, *utterly*, and *perfectly*. For example:

"She was absolutely devastated."

In this sentence, the intensifier *absolutely* not only amplifies the degree of sorrow but also strongly conveys the character's psychological suffering.

Similarly, Uzbek literary texts frequently employ intensifiers such as *juda*, *nihoyatda*, *g'oyat*, *o'ta*, and *benihoya*. Consider the following example:

"*U nihoyatda iztirob chekardi.*" Here, the intensifier *nihoyatda* serves to express the character's emotional experience at its highest degree.

N. Mahmudov, examining the relationship between language and thought, argues that evaluative linguistic devices reflect national worldviews. According to the scholar, linguistic units embody the moral, aesthetic, and cultural values of a nation (Mahmudov, 2012, p. 95). Consequently, numerous Uzbek intensifiers are closely associated with national evaluative standards.

Sh. Safarov, in his pragmalinguistic studies, analyzes the communicative impact of expressive units and emphasizes that evaluation and expressiveness constitute essential components of speech strategies (Safarov, 2008, p. 152). Within literary discourse, intensifiers function as instruments for realizing the author's communicative intentions.

From a linguocultural perspective, each nation's intensification devices are closely connected with its cultural experience. V. Maslova considers language a repository of cultural information and maintains that every linguistic unit reflects national culture (Maslova, 2001, p. 46). Therefore, English and Uzbek intensifiers exhibit distinct cultural characteristics.

Anna Wierzbicka, conducting comparative analyses of emotional concepts across cultures, argues that emotional restraint is relatively stronger in English-speaking cultures, whereas Eastern languages demonstrate a higher degree of emotional expressiveness (Wierzbicka, 1992, p. 126).

For example, in English: "*He was very disappointed.*" In Uzbek: "*Uning yuragi ezilib ketdi.*"

The second example demonstrates metaphorical intensification, which conveys not only emotional states but also culturally specific imagery.

Z. Kövecses, in his studies of emotional metaphors, argues that many languages conceptualize intensity through the domains of heat and fire (Kövecses, 2002, p. 159). English expressions such as:

Burning, anger, heated, debate, boiling with rage, illustrate this conceptualization.

Similarly, Uzbek employs metaphorical expressions such as: *qoni qaynamoq yuragi, yonmoq, alangalanib ketmoq*

These examples indicate that although the conceptual foundations of intensity may be universal, their linguistic realizations remain culturally specific.

Phraseological units also constitute important means of intensification in literary discourse. R. Moon characterizes phraseological expressions as products of historical experience and cultural memory (Moon, 1998, p. 214).

English contains numerous phraseological intensifiers, including: *dead tired, pitch black, stone cold, crystal clear*. Similarly, Uzbek possesses such phraseological intensifiers as: *tim qora, qip-qizil, jon-jahdi bilan, yer bilan yakson, jon kuydirmoq*

For example: "*Tim qora tun qishloq ustiga cho'kkan edi.*"

In this sentence, the intensifier *tim* expresses the highest degree of darkness and contributes to the enhancement of literary imagery.

Although K. Hyland primarily investigated scientific discourse, his theory of boosters can also be applied to literary texts. According to Hyland, boosting devices reinforce the author's position and increase the persuasive force of discourse (Hyland, 1998, p. 132).

Within literary discourse, intensifiers perform several important functions. First, they represent the emotional states of characters. Second, they strengthen the author's evaluative stance. Third, they enhance the expressiveness of the text. Fourth, they increase the pragmatic influence upon the reader. Finally, they reflect national and cultural values.

Comparative analysis demonstrates that individual evaluation and personal emotions prevail in English, whereas collective values, ethical norms, and national mentality are more prominent in Uzbek. English intensifiers such as *absolutely*, *incredibly*, and *utterly* primarily express individual emotions, whereas Uzbek intensifiers such as *nihoyatda*, *g'oyat*, and *benihoya* are closely associated with national systems of evaluation.

Thus, intensifiers in literary discourse should not be regarded merely as semantic devices; rather, they represent complex linguocultural phenomena. They embody national mentality, emotional concepts, cultural values, and communicative strategies. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek demonstrates both the universality of the category of intensity and its national-cultural specificity. Future corpus-based investigations of the frequency and pragmatic functions of intensifiers in literary texts may significantly contribute to further developments in this field.

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