WORLD CONFERENCE ON STUDENT - CENTERED LEARNING APPROACHES

LINGUOPRAGMATIC FEATURES OF GRADONYMIC RELATIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study examines the linguopragmatic features of gradonymic relations in English and Uzbek proverbs from a comparative perspective. Proverbs serve as an important means of preserving cultural values, social experience, and collective wisdom, while gradonymic relations contribute to the formation and interpretation of proverbial meanings. Despite the growing interest in semantic relations in paremiology, the linguopragmatic functions of gradonymic relations have received limited attention in comparative studies. The aim of the research is to identify and analyze gradonymic relations in English and Uzbek proverbs and to determine their role in conveying implicit meanings and communicative intentions. The study employs comparative, semantic, and linguopragmatic methods of analysis. The research material consists of selected English and Uzbek proverbs containing gradonymic structures. The findings indicate that gradonymic relations function not only as semantic scales expressing degrees of quantity, quality, status, or intensity, but also as pragmatic devices that enhance expressiveness, strengthen evaluative meaning, and reflect culturally specific patterns of thought. The comparative analysis reveals both universal and culture-specific features in the use of gradonymic relations in the two languages.

The study concludes that gradonymic relations play a significant role in shaping the linguopragmatic potential of proverbs and contribute to the effective transmission

of cultural knowledge and pragmatic meaning.

Keywords

gradonymic relations, linguopragmatics, proverbs, paremiology, pragmatic meaning, comparative analysis, English and Uzbek proverbs.

Gradonymic relations constitute one of the significant lexical-semantic phenomena in language and reflect the ordering of concepts according to a certain degree, intensity, quantity, size, value, or quality. Unlike absolute semantic oppositions, gradonymic relations represent a gradual transition between lexical units and indicate different stages within the same semantic field. Such relations enable speakers to express subtle distinctions and evaluate phenomena more precisely in communication. In modern linguistics, gradonymy is regarded as a semantic relationship based on hierarchy and degree. Lexical units involved in gradonymic relations are arranged along a scale, where each element occupies a specific position according to its semantic strength or intensity. Consequently, gradonymy contributes to the organization of lexical meaning and facilitates the representation of gradual conceptual changes. The study of gradonymic relations occupies an important place within lexical semantics because language users frequently categorize reality through comparisons and degrees. Human cognition naturally tends to perceive objects and events not only as opposites but also as elements located on a continuum. Therefore, gradonymic structures reflect cognitive processes through which speakers evaluate and interpret the surrounding world. Gradonymic relations are particularly evident in figurative language, including proverbs, sayings, and other paremiological units. Proverbs often rely on comparison, evaluation, and contrast to convey traditional wisdom and social experience. Proverbs represent a unique category of linguistic units that embody the cultural experience, moral values, and collective wisdom of a speech community. Due to their concise structure and figurative nature, proverbs serve not only as a means of communication but also as instruments of social influence and

evaluation. Their communicative effectiveness is largely determined by the interaction between semantic content and pragmatic interpretation. From a linguopragmatic perspective, the meaning of a proverb cannot be limited to its literal interpretation. In actual communication, proverbs frequently convey implicit messages that become understandable only within a specific context. The speaker employs a proverb to express an attitude, provide advice, criticize behavior, or strengthen an argument. Consequently, the pragmatic value of a proverb often exceeds its direct lexical meaning. One of the essential characteristics of proverbs is their ability to generate implicatures. Listeners are expected to infer meanings that are not explicitly stated but are implied through the proverb. This feature makes proverbs highly effective tools of indirect communication. The linguopragmatic nature of proverbs is also closely connected with cultural knowledge. Proverbs reflect socially accepted norms, traditional beliefs, and patterns of behavior that have been transmitted from generation to generation.

As a result, their interpretation requires not only linguistic competence but also familiarity with the cultural ackground of a particular speech community. Another important aspect of proverbs is their evaluative function. Proverbs frequently express approval or disapproval, praise or criticism, and therefore influence the attitudes and decisions of interlocutors. Through figurative language and concise expression, they strengthen the persuasive force of communication. The linguopragmatic analysis of proverbs demonstrates that their effectiveness is achieved through the interaction of semantic structure, contextual meaning, cultural knowledge, and communicative intention. Therefore, the study of proverbs from a linguopragmatic perspective provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which language conveys implicit meanings and influences human communication. These linguopragmatic characteristics become particularly evident in English proverbs where gradonymic relations contribute to the formation of implicit meaning and communicative effect. By

arranging lexical units according to different degrees of quantity, value, status, and condition, English proverbs convey moral judgments, practical wisdom, and cultural values in a concise and memorable form. The analysis of gradonymic relations in English proverbs demonstrates that gradation functions not only as a semantic device but also as an important mechanism for strengthening pragmatic impact.

One of the most representative examples is the proverb “Better a dinner of herbs than a stalled ox where hate is.” This proverb contains a gradonymic contrast between herbs and a stalled ox, which symbolize different levels of material value and abundance. While herbs represent simplicity and modest living, a stalled ox symbolizes wealth and prosperity. The gradonymic relation establishes a scale ranging from modest possessions to material richness. However, the proverb emphasizes that material prosperity loses its value when accompanied by hatred and hostility. From a linguopragmatic perspective, the proverb promotes the superiority of love, harmony, and mutual respect over wealth and luxury. The gradonymic structure intensifies the evaluative force of the message and encourages listeners to prioritize moral values rather than material possessions**.** Another example is found in the proverb “*Better are small fish than an empty dish*.” The gradonymic relation in this proverb is based on quantity and availability. The lexical units may be arranged along the semantic scale empty dish – small fish – abundance. Within this hierarchy, small fish occupies a higher position than empty dish, indicating that even a small amount is preferable to complete absence. The proverb reflects a traditional attitude toward contentment and practical wisdom. Its linguopragmatic significance lies in encouraging individuals to appreciate existing opportunities and resources rather than focus solely on what they lack. Through the use of gradonymic relations, the proverb reinforces the idea that limited success is preferable to total failure.

A different type of gradonymic relation can be observed in the proverb “*Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave*.” Here the gradonymic contrast is

expressed through the lexical units darling and slave, which represent different positions on a scale of affection, dignity, and personal freedom. Although the proverb originated within a specific social context, its broader meaning concerns the value of respect and appreciation in human relationships. Linguopragmatically, the proverb seeks to influence the listener's evaluation of social status and emotional well-being. The gradonymic opposition strengthens the persuasive effect of the proverb by presenting dignity and affection as superior to dependence and subordination.

The proverb "*A living dog is better than a dead lion*" provides another illustration of gradonymic relations in English paremiology. The opposition between living and dead represents different conditions of existence, while the contrast between dog and lion symbolizes different levels of power, prestige, and social value. Despite the lion's traditional association with strength and superiority, the proverb asserts that life itself is more valuable than lost greatness. The gradonymic structure therefore creates a hierarchy in which existence occupies a higher position than prestige without life. Pragmatically, the proverb encourages realistic judgment and emphasizes the practical importance of survival over unattainable glory or former achievements. The analysis of these proverbs demonstrates that gradonymic relations in English proverbial discourse are realized through various semantic scales, including quantity, value, social status, and condition. Such relations enhance the expressive potential of proverbs and facilitate the transmission of implicit meanings. Consequently, gradonymy functions as an effective linguopragmatic mechanism through which English proverbs communicate cultural knowledge, moral evaluation, and communicative intention in a concise yet persuasive manner. Gradonymic relations are also widely represented in Uzbek proverbs, where they serve as an effective means of expressing traditional wisdom, moral values, and social experience. Similar to English proverbs, Uzbek paremiological units employ lexical elements arranged according to different degrees of quantity, quality, value, and status. These gradonymic structures

contribute to the formation of implicit meanings and enhance the communicative impact of proverbial expressions. The analysis of Uzbek proverbs demonstrates that gradonymic relations are closely connected with cultural norms and pragmatic intentions.

One of the most illustrative examples is the proverb “Gapni oz so‘zla, ishni ko‘p ko‘zla.” The gradonymic relation is realized through the lexical units oz (little) and ko‘p (much), which represent different degrees on a quantitative scale. The proverb contrasts limited speech with extensive consideration and planning. From a linguopragmatic perspective, it promotes prudence, self-control, and thoughtful behavior. The gradonymic opposition strengthens the didactic message by encouraging individuals to speak less and act more responsibly. Thus, the proverb reflects the cultural appreciation of wisdom and restraint in communication.

Another example can be found in the proverb “Yo‘rtgan — o‘zar, yotgan — to‘zar.” The gradonymic structure is based on the contrast between activity and inactivity. The lexical units yo‘rtgan and yotgan occupy different positions on a scale of effort and productivity, while o‘zar and to‘zar indicate opposite outcomes of these conditions. The proverb conveys the idea that progress and success are achieved through action, whereas passivity leads to decline. Linguopragmatically, the proverb motivates individuals to remain active and hardworking. The gradonymic relation intensifies the persuasive effect by establishing a clear connection between effort and achievement. A further example is the proverb “Mehnat qilding, xo‘p qilding, minnat qilding, yo‘q qilding.” In this proverb, the gradonymic relation is expressed through the transition from a positive result to the loss of that result. The lexical units xo‘p and yo‘q represent different evaluative positions on a semantic scale. The proverb teaches that a good deed loses its value when accompanied by boasting or reproach. From a linguopragmatic perspective, it emphasizes humility and sincerity as important social virtues. The gradonymic structure strengthens the moral lesson and increases the

expressive power of the proverb. The proverb “Bilagi zo‘r birni yiqar, bilimi zo‘r mingni yiqar” demonstrates another significant type of gradonymic relation. The lexical units bir and ming form a quantitative scale that highlights the difference between physical strength and intellectual power. While physical force may influence only a limited number of individuals, knowledge possesses a much broader impact. The proverb therefore establishes a hierarchy in which intellectual ability occupies a higher position than physical power. Linguopragmatically, the proverb promotes education, knowledge, and wisdom as essential values within society. The gradonymic relation reinforces the persuasive message and contributes to the transmission of cultural attitudes toward learning. The analysis of these Uzbek proverbs reveals that gradonymic relations are realized through quantitative, evaluative, and activity-based semantic scales. These relations play an important role in shaping the pragmatic meaning of proverbs and enhancing their educational and persuasive functions. Consequently, gradonymy serves as an effective linguopragmatic mechanism through which Uzbek proverbs communicate moral values, social norms, and collective cultural experience. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs demonstrates that gradonymic relations perform similar semantic and pragmatic functions in both languages. In each linguistic tradition, gradonymy serves as a means of expressing evaluation, transmitting cultural values, and influencing the listener's perception. By arranging lexical units according to different degrees of quantity, value, status, and condition, proverbs convey moral lessons and social experience in a concise and memorable form. One of the common features observed in both English and Uzbek proverbs is the frequent use of quantitative gradation. For instance, the English proverb “Better are small fish than an empty dish” and the Uzbek proverb “Oz-oz o‘rganib dono bo‘lur, qatra-qatra yig‘ilib daryo bo‘lur” are based on the principle that small amounts may gradually lead to significant results. In both cases, the gradonymic structure emphasizes the value of patience, persistence, and

appreciation of available opportunities. The pragmatic function of these proverbs is to encourage individuals not to underestimate small achievements or modest beginnings. Another similarity can be observed in proverbs expressing evaluative gradation. The English proverb “Better a dinner of herbs than a stalled ox where hate is” and the Uzbek proverb “Yaxshi bilan yursang yetarsan murodga, yomon bilan yursang qolarsan uyatga” both prioritize moral and social values over material or external advantages. Although the lexical structures differ, both proverbs employ gradonymic relations to contrast positive and negative conditions. Their pragmatic purpose is to guide human behavior by promoting desirable ethical values and discouraging harmful attitudes. The comparison also reveals similarities in proverbs related to success and personal development. The English proverb “A living dog is better than a dead lion” and the Uzbek proverb “Yo‘rtgan — o‘zar, yotgan — to‘zar” emphasize the importance of practical action and realistic judgment. In both cases, the gradonymic opposition serves to highlight the superiority of a beneficial condition over an unfavorable one. The pragmatic effect is achieved through the encouragement of activity, perseverance, and rational decision-making. Despite these similarities, several differences can be identified. English proverbs frequently express gradonymic relations through images associated with individual experience, material conditions, and practical wisdom. Uzbek proverbs, on the other hand, often reflect collective values, social relationships, moral education, and respect for knowledge. For example, the proverb “Bilagi zo‘r birni yiqar, bilimi zo‘r mingni yiqar” demonstrates a strong cultural emphasis on intellectual development and the social value of education. Gradonymy enables speakers to communicate complex ideas through simple lexical oppositions and hierarchical semantic scales. As a result, proverbs become effective instruments of indirect communication and cultural transmission. The comparative analysis demonstrates that gradonymic relations play a significant role in the proverbial systems of both English and Uzbek languages. Although their linguistic

expression differs depending on cultural and contextual factors, they perform nearly identical communicative and pragmatic functions. By employing gradonymic patterns, proverbs in both languages effectively transmit traditional wisdom, ethical principles, and shared social experience from one generation to another.

Overall, The present study examined the linguopragmatic features of gradonymic relations in English and Uzbek proverbs from a comparative perspective. The analysis demonstrated that gradonymic relations constitute an important lexical-semantic mechanism through which proverbs express evaluation, convey cultural knowledge, and strengthen communicative impact. The findings revealed that both English and Uzbek proverbs employ gradonymic structures based on different semantic scales, including quantity, value, social status, condition, and activity. These gradonymic relations enable speakers to communicate complex ideas and moral lessons through concise and figurative expressions. In both linguistic traditions, gradonymy contributes significantly to the formation of implicit meanings and enhances the persuasive force of proverbial discourse. The comparative analysis showed that English and Uzbek proverbs share a number of common linguopragmatic characteristics. In both languages, gradonymic relations are used to promote socially accepted values, guide human behavior, and transmit collective experience. At the same time, certain differences were identified in the cultural orientation of the proverbs. English proverbs tend to emphasize practical wisdom and individual experience, whereas Uzbek proverbs more frequently reflect moral education, social harmony, and respect for knowledge. Furthermore, the study confirmed that gradonymic relations perform not only a semantic function but also an important pragmatic role. They facilitate evaluation, intensify expressiveness, and influence the interpretation of proverbial meanings within specific communicative contexts. Therefore, gradonymy can be regarded as one of the essential linguopragmatic devices contributing to the effectiveness and cultural significance of proverbs.

In conclusion, the research highlights the importance of studying gradonymic relations within a linguopragmatic framework and demonstrates their role in revealing both universal and culture-specific features of English and Uzbek proverbial discourse.

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