THE STRUCTURAL-SEMANTIC AND FUNCTIONAL-PRAGMATIC DIMENSIONS OF PEJORATIVE EVALUATION: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. *This study undertakes a contrastive examination of the category of pejorative (derogatory) evaluation in English and Uzbek—two genealogically unrelated languages. It interrogates the multi-level actualisation of negative axiological meaning across the paragraphemic, lexical and grammatical strata, foregrounding its communicative-pragmatic functions and its embeddedness in divergent linguocultural value systems.*

Keywords: *pejoration, axiological evaluation, connotation, contrastive linguistics, pragmatics, linguoculturology, paragraphemics, expressivity, derogation.*

Contemporary linguistics no longer construes language as a static system but as a dynamic communicative mechanism inextricably bound to socio-cultural and cognitive processes. Under the pressures of globalisation, digitally mediated communication and intensified intercultural contact, the evaluative and expressive resources of language have been markedly reactivated, and their social salience amplified. Pejorative expressions, in particular, no longer operate merely as instruments of appraisal: they function as mechanisms of social demarcation, discreditation and symbolic coercion. The imperative to investigate pejorative evaluation through an integrative prism—semantic, pragmatic and linguocultural—thus acquires considerable theoretical urgency.

The extant scholarship has predominantly examined pejoration within the confines of a single language, treating it as a chiefly lexical or stylistic phenomenon. The semantic architecture, pragmatic behaviour and linguocultural underpinnings of pejorative units have not been subjected to a systematic, complex and contrastive analysis along the English–Uzbek axis. It is precisely this lacuna that the present contribution seeks to redress.

The aim of the study is to elucidate, on a contrastive basis, the structural-semantic and functional-pragmatic properties of the means encoding pejorative evaluation in English and Uzbek. The **object** of inquiry comprises the discursive situations in which pejorative evaluation is actualised in the two languages; its **subject matter** encompasses the paralinguistic, lexico-stylistic and grammatical devices that operationalise negative evaluation in literary and internet-mediated discourse. The investigation is conducted through descriptive, contrastive, contextual, componential, linguostatistical and pragmatic methods of analysis.

Findings.

First, pejorative evaluation emerges as an anthropocentric category, actualised in intimate conjunction with the categories of emotivity, modality and expressivity. Negative evaluation manifests in both rational (objective) and emotive (subjective) modalities and, in each language, is constituted in organic interdependence with nationally specific stereotypes, axiological constants (probity, honour, industriousness, deference to elders) and prevailing communicative norms.

Second, paragraphemic devices constitute a semiotic stratum that visually intensifies pejorative force: capitalisation, emboldening, iterated punctuation and deliberate orthographic distortion serve to amplify negative evaluation. Within the digital communicative environment, emoji and stickers expedite the conveyance of irony, derision and aggressive stance. Consequently, pejorative evaluation is migrating from a verbal phenomenon toward a multimodal communicative one.

Third, the lexical stratum constitutes the most productive locus of negative evaluation. Zoonyms, metaphors and phraseological units are deployed to denigrate the intellectual, moral or social attributes of the referent. English *idiot, moron* are matched in Uzbek by *ahmoq, tentak, nodon*; *drunkard* corresponds to *ichkilikboz, aroqxo‘r, mayxo‘r*; the metaphorical *pig, snake, clown* find their counterparts in *eshak, it, ilon, qo‘y, maymun*. In present-day Uzbek usage the pejorative lexicon is being augmented through borrowings from Russian and English and through the mechanisms of semantic broadening, narrowing, metaphor and metonymy.

Fourth, grammatical resources play a pivotal role in investing neutral units with negative expressive meaning. At the morphological level, pejoration arises along two trajectories: the negative charge proceeds either from the lexical base itself or directly from the affix (Uzbek *-parast*, *-boz*, *-vachcha*; English *blackie*, which bears a markedly more derogatory tonality than the neutral *black*). At the syntactic level, negative and demonstrative pronouns (English *nobody, nothing*; Uzbek *hech kim, bu, u*) together with expressive interrogatives (*“Who do you think you are?”, “Why are you so stupid?”*) operate as pragmatic instruments that nullify the dignity of the referent.

Conclusion. Pejorative evaluation constitutes a complex communicative-pragmatic phenomenon that is actualised holistically across the paragraphemic, lexical and grammatical strata of both English and Uzbek. The contrastive analysis of two unrelated languages simultaneously discloses typological convergences in the mechanisms of negative evaluation—metaphorical transfer, affixal derogation, the expressive interrogative—and nationally conditioned divergences. The results lend themselves to application in the compilation of textbooks in contrastive linguistics, pragmalinguistics, linguoculturology and translation studies, as well as in literary translation and media localisation, where the selection of adequate equivalents for pejorative units is at stake.

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