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CROSS-CULTURAL PRAGMATIC DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF OXYMORONS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Abstract

Oxymoron is a commonly employed rhetorical and stylistic tool that merges semantically opposing elements to create a cohesive and impactful meaning. Though oxymorons have typically been examined in stylistics and rhetoric, their pragmatic and intercultural aspects are still not thoroughly investigated, especially regarding the Uzbek and English languages. This article seeks to explore the cross-cultural pragmatic variations in the application and understanding of oxymorons in English and Uzbek discourse. Utilizing pragmatic theories and cultural linguistics principles, the research examines oxymorons drawn from literary works, conversations, and media discussions in both languages. The study uses contextual, pragmatic, and comparative approaches to analyze how speaker intention, cultural norms, and communicative context affect the understanding of oxymoronic expressions. The results indicate that although oxymorons in both languages serve comparable pragmatic roles—such as conveying irony, judgment, and emotional strength—their occurrence, favored settings, and interpretive approaches vary considerably because of cultural and communicative norms. The research enhances cross-cultural pragmatics by showing that oxymorons serve not only as stylistic devices but also as culturally rooted pragmatic instruments that represent unique perspectives and communication styles in Uzbek and English

Key words: oxymoron, pragmatics, cross-cultural analysis, discourse, Uzbek language, English language.

INTRODUCTION

Oxymoron is a commonly employed rhetorical and stylistic tool that merges semantically opposing elements to create a cohesive and impactful meaning. Though oxymorons have typically been examined in stylistics and rhetoric, their pragmatic and intercultural aspects are still not thoroughly investigated, especially regarding the Uzbek and English languages. This article seeks to explore the cross-cultural pragmatic variations in the application and understanding

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of oxymorons in English and Uzbek discourse. Utilizing pragmatic theories and cultural linguistics principles, the research examines oxymorons drawn from literary works, conversations, and media discussions in both languages. The study uses contextual, pragmatic, and comparative approaches to analyze how speaker intention, cultural norms, and communicative context affect the understanding of oxymoronic expressions. The results indicate that although oxymorons in both languages serve comparable pragmatic roles—such as conveying irony, judgment, and emotional strength—their occurrence, favored settings, and interpretive approaches vary considerably because of cultural and communicative norms. The research enhances cross-cultural pragmatics by showing that oxymorons serve not only as stylistic devices but also as culturally rooted pragmatic instruments that represent unique perspectives and communication styles in Uzbek and English

Additionally, cultural factors significantly shape the usage and understanding of oxymorons. Various languages and cultures utilize figurative devices based on their communication standards, aesthetic tastes, and styles of indirectness or expressiveness. Although there is an increasing interest in cross-cultural pragmatics, there are still few comparative studies on oxymorons in diverse typological and cultural languages like Uzbek and English

This article aims to address this gap by examining the cross-cultural pragmatic variations in oxymoron usage between Uzbek and English. The primary aim is to illustrate how cultural standards and pragmatic practices influence the roles, occurrence, and understanding of oxymoronic expressions in both languages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of oxymoron traces back to classical rhetoric. Aristotle recognized the persuasive strength of contradiction, although the term oxymoron was established subsequently. Traditionally, oxymorons have been seen as rhetorical devices intended to capture interest and produce a pleasing effect.

In contemporary linguistics, oxymorons have been examined mainly in the fields of stylistics and semantics. Researchers characterize them as lexical or phrasal constructs that merge antonymous or logically contradictory components to generate a paradoxical interpretation. From a semantic standpoint, oxymorons are frequently elucidated via the interplay of denotative and connotative significances.

Pragmatic methods regarding figurative language provide a more dynamic clarification. Grice's Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims offer a basis for comprehending how listeners derive non-literal meanings when literal interpretations seem inconsistent. Grice proposes that speakers deliberately breach maxims like Quality or Manner to produce implicatures. Oxymorons can be seen as intentional breaches that encourage the audience to uncover an underlying significance.

Leech's Politeness Principle and expressive pragmatics elaborate on how figurative language fulfills interpersonal roles, such as assessment and emotional communication. Mey highlights the importance of social and cultural context in pragmatic understanding, asserting that meaning is inseparable from its cultural backdrop.In cross-cultural pragmatics, researchers have shown that figurative expressions reflect culturally specific patterns of communication. English discourse often values irony, understatement, and implicit evaluation, while Uzbek discourse traditionally emphasizes emotional expressiveness, moral evaluation, and imagery rooted in cultural and poetic traditions.

While numerous studies focus on metaphors and idioms through a cross-cultural lens, oxymorons are still not well-explored, especially in comparative studies of Uzbek and English.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative, descriptive, and comparative approach to examine the cross-cultural pragmatic variations in the use of oxymorons in Uzbek and English. The methodological approach is rooted in pragmatics and cultural linguistics, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the functioning of oxymoronic expressions in particular communicative and cultural contexts. A qualitative method is especially suitable for this research because it

emphasizes meaning creation, speaker intent, and contextual understanding rather than quantitative analysis.The study is descriptive in essence, seeking to deliver a systematic overview of the pragmatic roles of oxymorons in both languages. Moreover, a comparative method is utilized to recognize the similarities and distinctions in the pragmatic application of oxymorons in Uzbek and English. This method allows for the examination of how cultural standards, beliefs, and communication practices affect the creation and understanding of oxymoronic phrases.

The study's data comprises oxymorons gathered from various types of Uzbek and English discourse. These consist of literary works like novels, short stories, and poetry, where oxymorons often appear as expressive and evaluative tools. Conversations from both fictional and somewhat authentic sources were analyzed to investigate the pragmatic application of oxymorons in interactive situations. Moreover, media and journalistic texts, such as newspaper articles and digital publications, were examined to illustrate modern language usage. Utilizing various sources guarantees a varied and representative dataset, enabling a more thorough pragmatic analysis.

Oxymoronic phrases were chosen based on particular standards. Every expression needed to feature a distinct semantic contradiction or inconsistency among its parts. Moreover, the oxymoron needed to manifest within a distinctly recognizable communicative setting that enabled pragmatic understanding. The analysis included only those expressions that exhibited a noticeable pragmatic function, like indicating irony, evaluation, emotional intensity, or attitudinal stance. Expressions that had become entirely lexicalized and no longer showed pragmatic force were omitted.

The examination of the data was conducted using various interconnected techniques. Contextual analysis was utilized to investigate every oxymoron within its specific and wider discourse context, considering situational elements, communicative objectives, and the connections among participants. This allowed for the assessment of how contextual details influence the understanding of oxymoronic meaning. Pragmatic analysis centered on recognizing speaker intent and suggested meaning, utilizing Grice's Cooperative Principle and the concept of conversational implicature. Oxymorons were regarded as examples of intentional pragmatic divergence that prompt the listener or reader to deduce non-literal significance. Aspects of Leech's Politeness Principle were taken into account, especially in instances where oxymorons served as evaluative or interpersonal tactics.

A comparative approach was employed to analyze the pragmatic application of oxymorons in English and Uzbek. This included examining their communicative roles, favored discourse settings, and interpretive methods. Particular focus was given to cultural elements affecting pragmatic understanding, including standards of indirectness, emotional expressiveness, and rhetorical conventions. By making this comparison, the research emphasizes how analogous pragmatic roles are expressed differently in the two languages, influenced by cultural and communicative norms.

The study's theoretical framework relies on fundamental models in pragmatics and cultural linguistics. Grice's implicature theory lays the groundwork for comprehending how conflicting statements produce implied meanings. Leech's practical theory aids in examining evaluative and expressive functions, whereas Mey's socio-pragmatic perspective highlights the significance of social and cultural context in understanding meaning. Relevance Theory elaborates on the mental processes required to address seemingly contradictory semantics and achieve a pragmatically relevant understanding.

To guarantee reliability and validity, the analysis was performed methodically and uniformly in both languages. Oxymorons were explored across various contexts, and interpretations were based on recognized pragmatic theory instead of personal intuition. Academic references were meticulously cited, and uniform analytical standards were maintained across the research. Because all data were obtained from publicly accessible written materials and there were no human participants included, no ethical issues emerged during the research.

Although it has its advantages, the study presents some limitations. The research's

qualitative nature and the dataset's size restrict the generalizability of the results. The analysis mainly emphasizes written discourse, while spoken interaction is not thoroughly represented. Subsequent studies could tackle these constraints by including more extensive corpora, employing quantitative techniques, or utilizing spoken and digital discourse data.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Oxymorons in Uzbek and English fulfill various pragmatic roles. A notable example is the use of irony. Expressions in English like "seriously funny" or "clearly confused" frequently convey ironic assessment, necessitating that the listener reanalyze the evident contradiction.

O'zbek tilida "achchiq quvonch" (g'amgin xursandchilik) yoki "sokin bo'ron" (jim to'fon) kabi okşimoronlar murakkab hissiy holatlarni ifodalaydi, ko'pincha xursandchilikni g'am bilan yoki sokinlikni ichki chayqalish bilan birlashtiradi. These phrases are pragmatically powerful as they succinctly convey emotional ambivalence.

A significant role is assessment. Oxymorons enable speakers to express subtle feelings without direct criticism. In English, "cruel kindness" can suggest disapproval, whereas in Uzbek, "go'zal fojea" (beautiful tragedy) usually conveys a sense of philosophical acceptance instead of sarcasm.Emotional amplification serves as an important pragmatic role. The inherent contradiction in oxymorons enhances expressiveness and captures the listener's focus, amplifying the communicative effect.

Cultural norms greatly affect how oxymorons are interpreted. Modern English communication frequently employs oxymorons in informal chats and media to generate humor or irony. This illustrates a cultural tendency for humor, nuance, and indirect evaluation. Conversely, Uzbek discourse often employs oxymorons more commonly in literary and poetic settings. Uzbek culture highly values figurative expression, emotional richness, and ethical contemplation. Consequently, oxymorons frequently express philosophical concepts associated with destiny, affection, and human anguish.

For instance, an English oxymoron might elicit a grin or ironic reading, while an Uzbek oxymoron could evoke reflection and emotional depth. This distinction emphasizes how practical interpretation is influenced by common cultural understanding and anticipations.

English oxymorons are frequently utilized in daily conversation, media, and marketing. O'zbek oksimoronlari adabiy va she'riy nutqda ko'proq uchraydi.Oxymorons in English frequently have ironic or comedic intentions. O'zbek oksimoronlari hissiy va falsafiy chuqurlikni ta'kidlaydi.

English listeners depend significantly on irony and implications. O'zbek tinglovchilari madaniy ramzlar va hissiy bog'lanishlardan foydalanadilar.

Regardless of these variations, both languages employ oxymorons as effective pragmatic devices that condense intricate meanings into brief phrases.The examination shows that oxymorons in Uzbek and English serve comparable fundamental pragmatic roles, such as irony, assessment, and emotional enhancement. Nonetheless, their application and understanding are influenced by specific cultural and communicative norms.

The results indicate that oxymorons are not only stylistic tools but also culturally ingrained pragmatic occurrences. Grasping their cross-cultural differences broadens our insight into how language embodies cultural perspectives and communication standards.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the cross-cultural pragmatic variations in the use of oxymorons in Uzbek and English, highlighting both universal and culture-specific features. The analysis demonstrates that, while oxymorons in both languages perform comparable pragmatic functions—such as conveying irony, evaluative judgment, and emotional intensity—their occurrence, favored contexts, and interpretive strategies are strongly influenced by cultural norms and communicative conventions. English oxymorons are often used in informal discourse, media, and marketing to produce irony or humor, reflecting a cultural preference for indirect evaluation and subtle nuance. In contrast, Uzbek oxymorons predominantly appear in literary and poetic contexts, emphasizing philosophical

reflection, emotional depth, and culturally rooted symbolic meaning.

The findings reveal that oxymorons function not merely as stylistic devices but as culturally embedded pragmatic tools that encode speakers' intentions, societal values, and worldview. By integrating pragmatics, contextual analysis, and cultural linguistics, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of figurative language in intercultural communication, illustrating how seemingly similar linguistic devices may be interpreted differently across cultures.

Future research could expand the scope by incorporating larger and more diverse corpora, analyzing spoken and digital discourse, and employing quantitative methods to further investigate the interplay of culture, pragmatics, and figurative expression. Overall, this study underscores the importance of considering both linguistic form and cultural context when interpreting oxymorons in cross-cultural communication.

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