

COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC MODELS OF LITERARY MEANING FORMATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK NOVELS

Kurbanova Ilmira Sharifovna

Associate Professor, Tashkent State Transport University

Email: ikurbanova747@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1613-7556>

Abstract:

The article asks which cognitive model a reader must construct to interpret a passage of literary prose, and whether English and Uzbek texts call for these models through different linguistic means. Four models are examined – frame transfer, conceptual blending, text-world switching and image schemas – on eight passages from G. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, K. Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, V. Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, A. Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar*, A. Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* and O'. Hoshimov's *Tushda kechgan umrlar*. Each passage is analysed for its input structures, type of projection, linguistic trigger and emergent meaning. The analysis shows that comparable models are triggered in English mainly by syntactic and lexical means (definitional copula, polysemy, second-person conditional, adjectives of size) and in Uzbek mainly by register-marked loanwords, numerals with modal particles, inclusive and counterfactual morphology and lexicalised spatial idioms. The same model may also project in opposite directions: Orwell raises a trivial frame to an absolute, while Hoshimov lowers atrocity to routine.

Keywords: Cognitive semantics, frame, conceptual blending, text world, image schema, literary meaning, English novel, Uzbek novel.

Introduction

Literary meaning is not stored in words; it is assembled by the reader from what the words prompt. A single sentence may require the reader to combine two areas of knowledge, to imagine a world that does not exist even inside the fiction, or to experience an abstract state through a bodily shape. Cognitive semantics offers precise models for these operations, but comparative studies of English and Uzbek fiction have rarely asked whether the two languages prompt the same models in the same way.

This article addresses two questions. First, which cognitive model – a frame, a blend of mental spaces, a text world or an image schema – is the minimum the reader must build to interpret a given passage? Second, how do the grammatical and lexical resources of Uzbek and English

differ in triggering these models? The answers are sought in paired passages from six novels, each pair chosen because the two passages require the same model.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The four models used here come from different strands of cognitive linguistics. C. Fillmore's frame semantics holds that a word evokes a structured scene of participants and expectations, and that understanding a text means activating and combining such frames [1]. G. Fauconnier and M. Turner extend this to conceptual integration: two or more mental spaces are partially matched, selectively projected into a blended space, and the blend develops emergent structure that belongs to neither input [2]. P. Werth's Text World Theory describes how discourse builds a text world from deictic and referential elements and how modal and hypothetical expressions open further worlds within it [3]; J. Gavins systematised these "world-switches" for literary analysis [4]. M. Johnson showed that recurrent bodily experiences – containment, centre and periphery, balance – form image schemas that structure abstract thought [5].

E. Semino's account of world creation in literary texts demonstrated how schema theory and possible-world semantics explain the reader's construction of fictional worlds [6]. In Russian cognitive linguistics, E. S. Kubryakova treated language as a means of representing and organising knowledge, which made the linguistic form of a concept a legitimate object of semantic study [7], and N. N. Boldyrev described the conceptual space of cognitive linguistics as a system of knowledge structures accessed through language [8]. In Uzbek linguistics, Sh. Safarov introduced the main notions of cognitive linguistics [9], and D. Xudoyberganova applied an anthropocentric approach to the Uzbek text [10].

These models are usually applied one at a time. Here they are treated as alternatives, and four criteria are applied to every passage: (1) the input structures the reader must activate; (2) the type of projection between them (transfer of a frame, blending, world-switch, schematic structuring); (3) the linguistic trigger that sets the operation in motion; and (4) the emergent meaning that cannot be derived from either input alone.

Materials and Methods

The material comprises eight passages from six novels: G. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, K. Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and V. Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*; A. Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar*, A. Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* and O'. Hoshimov's *Tushda kechgan umrlar* [S1–S6]. Passages were selected when a lexical reading alone left the meaning incomplete, and they were paired so that an English and an Uzbek passage required the same model. Every quotation was checked against the page image of the edition cited; translations of Uzbek passages are the author's. The analysis combines cognitive-semantic modelling with contextual interpretation; no frequency data are used.

Results and Discussion

Frame transfer. In his diary Winston Smith writes: "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows" [S2, p. 76]. Two frames are activated.

The arithmetic frame supplies an elementary, universally verifiable truth; the political frame supplies rights, permission and authority. The trigger is syntactic: a definitional copula (Freedom is the freedom to...) embeds an arithmetic proposition in the slot normally filled by a political right, and the second sentence imports a third frame, that of axiomatic deduction. The emergent meaning is the measure of the regime: where the most trivial truth needs permission, it becomes the axiom from which every other freedom must be derived.

Hoshimov's novel transfers a frame in the opposite direction. A retired security officer, recalling his methods of interrogation, describes torture in the vocabulary of a technician: "To'g'ri, «gorshok» operatsiyasi xotinlardan ko'ra erkak kishida yaxshi effekt beradi. Lekin bu usulni xotin kishiga ham bemalol qo'llasa bo'laveradi. Bunisiyam oddiy metod"; a few lines later: "Xullas, «gorshok» operatsiyasi juda qulay" [S6, p. 27] ('True, the "pot" operation gives a better effect on men than on women. But the method can be used on a woman without any trouble. This one is a simple method, too. [...] In short, the "pot" operation is very convenient'). The frame of a technical or medical procedure (operatsiya, effekt, usul, metod, qulay) is laid over a scene of violence; the quotation marks around gorshok present a professional nickname. The trigger is lexical and register-based: Russian and international loanwords mark the bureaucratic-scientific idiom of the Soviet institution inside Uzbek inner speech. Orwell raises a trivial frame to the status of an absolute; Hoshimov lowers atrocity to routine. In both cases the emergent meaning lies in the reader's refusal of the transfer: the reader's moral frame collides with the character's technical one, and the collision produces the irony.

Conceptual blending. In *Never Let Me Go* Miss Emily, pointing at a map in a geography lesson, calls Norfolk "a peaceful corner of England" and "something of a lost corner"; the pupils already have their own "Lost Corner" on the third floor of Hailsham, "where the lost property was kept". The result is a blend: "Miss Emily had said was that Norfolk was England's 'lost corner,' where all the lost property found in the country ended up" [S3, Part One, ch. 6]. One input is the remote county, the other the school's lost-property room; the generic space is a place named lost corner. The blend develops emergent structure of its own: the children imagine vehicles "delivering anything left behind in fields and trains to this place called Norfolk". The trigger is lexical polysemy – lost as 'out of the way' and lost as 'misplaced' – supported by the capitalised school name. The blend shows how children with no access to the outside world build knowledge from the materials they have, and it gives the novel a recurring hope that what is lost may be recovered.

Hoshimov's novel opens with a blend of a different kind. The young diarist asks: "Men necha yoshga chiqdim o'zi? Yigirma ikkiga?! Yo'g'-e, axir men yetmish ikkidaman-ku! Balki, sakson ikkidadir? Nima farqi bor?!" [S6, p. 3] ('How old am I now? Twenty-two?! No, surely I'm seventy-two! Maybe eighty-two? What does it matter?!'). The inputs are chronological age and age measured by experience; the blend is a speaker who is young and old at once. The trigger is numerical and modal: the shared element *ikki* lets the numbers slide from 22 to 72 to 82, and the particle *-ku* presents the impossible age as self-evident. The emergent meaning – a life compressed by war into a few years – anticipates the title, in which whole lives pass "as in a

dream". Ishiguro's blend is collective, built from a misheard word and later abandoned as a joke; Hoshimov's is individual, built from numerals and a particle, and never withdrawn.

Text-world switching. Ishiguro's narrator addresses the reader directly: "If you're one of them, I can understand how you might get resentful—about my bedsit, my car, above all, the way I get to pick and choose who I look after" [S3, Part One, ch. 1]. The conditional opens a hypothetical world in which the reader is another carer. The second person draws a participant of the discourse world into the text world before the reader knows what a carer is; the reader is placed among Kathy's peers and only later understands the cost of that position.

Cho'lpon opens a hypothetical world of another kind. Having explained that Miryoqub and his travelling companion cannot properly understand each other's language, the narrator writes: "Ular ikkovi bittadan «kundalik daftarcha» yuritgan bo'lsalar, mana bunga o'xshagan yaxshigina sarguzashtnoma hosil bo'laridi" [S5, p. 168] ('Had the two of them each kept a "diary", a fine travelogue like this would have come of it'), and then presents entries signed with the names the characters give each other, beginning: "Bilmadim, bu poezd meni qaerga olib boradi?" (I don't know where this train is taking me'). The counterfactual -gan bo'lsalar ...-(a)ridi marks the diaries as a world that never existed even in the fiction. The narrator thus gains access to two minds that cannot communicate, while openly labelling that access as a hypothesis.

Qodiriy places the reader inside the text world by a third means. When two visitors ask for Otabek, the narrator reports: "Bizga tanish hujra ko'rsatilish bilan ular shu tomonga qarab yurdilar" [S4, p. 11] ('Shown the cell already familiar to us, they walked towards it'). The inclusive biz 'us' merges narrator and reader into one observer who has already seen the cell. English in these passages builds the world-switch with if and you, assigning the reader a role; Uzbek builds it with inclusive person marking and with counterfactual verb morphology, placing the reader beside the narrator or inside an openly hypothetical document.

Image schemas. Alone at last, Mrs Ramsay feels: "To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others" [S1, p. 99]. The passage is organised by the schemas CENTRE–PERIPHERY and CONTAINER and by the movement from expansion to contraction. The social self is an outward, visible surface (expansive, glittering, vocal); the private self is a dense, dark centre. The paragraph continues that "this self having shed its attachments was free for the strangest adventures", and that when "life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless": contraction of the container yields an unlimited inner space.

In Qodiriy's novel Kumush says to Otabek: "Boshqalar yuragini sinab ko'rishka qudratim yetmasa ham manim yuragim ikki narsani o'z ichiga sig'dira olmaydir..." [S4, p. 311] ('Though I have no power to test other hearts, my heart cannot hold two things within itself'). Here the heart is a CONTAINER of fixed capacity: the verb sig'dirmoq 'to make fit' with the reflexive o'z ichiga 'into itself' turns a familiar idiom into an argument about the exclusiveness of love,

and Otabek answers within the same schema. Woolf's container shrinks to gain freedom; Qodiriy's has a fixed volume that defines fidelity. Woolf builds the schema with adjectives and verbs of size and shape (shrunk, wedge-shaped); Qodiriy revives a lexicalised spatial idiom in dialogue.

Table 1. Cognitive models, triggers and emergent meanings in the paired passages

Model	English passage: trigger	Uzbek passage: trigger	Emergent meaning
Frame transfer	Orwell, p. 76: definitional copula + arithmetic proposition	Hoshimov, p. 27: technical loanwords (operatsiya, effekt, metod)	Trivial raised to absolute vs. atrocity lowered to routine
Conceptual blend	Ishiguro, ch. 6: polysemy of lost	Hoshimov, p. 3: numerals + particle -ku	Collective childish knowledge vs. life compressed by war
Text-world switch	Ishiguro, ch. 1: if + you	Cho'lpon, p. 168: counterfactual -gan bo'lsa; Qodiriy, p. 11: inclusive biz	Reader cast as participant vs. reader beside narrator; openly hypothetical access to minds
Image schema	Woolf, p. 99: adjectives and verbs of size (shrunk, wedge-shaped)	Qodiriy, p. 311: idiom o'z ichiga sig'dirmoq	Contracting self gains freedom vs. fixed capacity defines fidelity

The comparison yields three results. First, each passage has a minimal model that cannot be replaced by another without loss: the Norfolk passage needs a blend, not merely two frames, and Cho'lpon's diaries need a world-switch, not merely a metaphor. Second, the English triggers in these passages are predominantly syntactic and lexical, whereas the Uzbek ones rely more often on morphology (-ku, inclusive biz, counterfactual -gan bo'lsa) and on register-marked or idiomatic lexis. Third, the same model can work in opposite directions, as frame transfer does in Orwell and Hoshimov, so the direction of projection is itself a parameter of comparison.

Conclusion

Literary meaning in the passages examined depends on cognitive models that the reader must construct beyond word meaning: frame transfer, conceptual blending, text-world switching and image schemas. Analysing each passage by its inputs, projection, trigger and emergent meaning makes it possible to compare English and Uzbek novels without reducing them to lists of devices.

In the English passages these models are triggered by a definitional copula, by polysemy, by the second-person conditional and by adjectives of size; in the Uzbek passages by register-marked loanwords, numerals with the modal particle -ku, inclusive and counterfactual morphology and a lexicalised container idiom. The grid of four criteria proposed here can be used to compare further passages and to test whether these tendencies hold across larger samples; it also offers translators a way to identify which element of a passage carries the cognitive operation that must be preserved.

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