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# ARTISTIC AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF EUPHEMISTIC PERIPHRASES (Based on Tohir Malik's novel “Shaytanat”)

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes the linguopoetic features of periphrases formed by euphemistic means in Tohir Malik's novel “Shaytanat”. It examines the role of periphrases in expressing unpleasant, frightening, tragic, or morally burdensome concepts of human life in a figurative and softened form, without naming them directly. The study analyzes, semantically and stylistically, such periphrases as “indamaslar olami” (“the world of the silent”), “kulfat bo'roni” (“the storm of calamity”), “abri balo” (“the cloud of misfortune”), “ajalning soyasi” (“the shadow of death”), “yog'och ot” (“the wooden horse”), “so'nggi ziyoratgoh” (“the final shrine”), “o'limning shirin suvi” (“the sweet water of death”), “o'lim sharpasi” (“the specter of death”), “qurigan umid daraxti” (“the withered tree of hope”), and “g'azab iskanjasi” (“the vise of rage”). It is established that in these units negative content such as death, the grave, illness, misfortune, fear, tyranny, slander, and despair is expressed through metaphorical images. The study substantiates that euphemistic periphrases reveal the writer's individual artistic thinking, strengthen the emotional-expressive force of the text, and produce a particular psychological and aesthetic impression on the reader.

**Keywords:** periphrasis, euphemism, euphemistic periphrasis, metaphor, semantics, linguopoetics, literary text, figurativeness, death, tyranny, Tohir Malik, “Shaytanat”.

**Introduction.** Language makes it possible to express the events and phenomena of human thought by various means. While some concepts can be named directly, in other cases expressing them straightforwardly is inappropriate from a communicative, moral, psychological, or aesthetic standpoint. In such situations, euphemistic expressions acquire great importance. In Uzbek literary discourse, euphemistic periphrases function as an important linguistic device that not only avoids naming reality directly and expresses delicate or negatively charged concepts in a softer, figurative, and aesthetic form, but also broadens the semantic and pragmatic potential of the text. Observations made on the material of Tohir Malik's novel “Shaytanat” have shown that in a literary text euphemistic periphrases are not merely substitute names for a particular concept, but an active device that reveals the character's inner world, the author's attitude, the substantive essence of events, and the overall aesthetic conception of the work.

**Euphemism** is the use of a softer, indirect, and often figurative expression in place of a coarse, harsh, unpleasant, or negatively colored name of a given concept or phenomenon. In

fiction, euphemism performs not only the function of softening speech but also those of revealing a character's psychological state, intensifying the tragic essence of a certain phenomenon, and heightening aesthetic impact.

**Periphrasis**, in turn, is the naming of an object, phenomenon, or concept not by its direct name but descriptively, on the basis of a feature, property, or image characteristic of it. In cases where euphemism and periphrasis overlap, a negative or unpleasant concept is expressed in a figurative and relatively softened form, alongside the avoidance of direct naming. Such units can be studied as euphemistic periphrases.

Units of this kind, which express the complex and tragic facets of human life, occupy a significant place in Tohir Malik's novel "Shaytanat". They can be grouped and analyzed as follows.

**I. Euphemistic periphrases expressing the concepts of death and the grave**

For example, the phrase "indamaslar olami" ("the world of the silent") does not directly name the "grave", the "world of the deceased", or the "place of the dead". By referring to those who lie in the grave as "indamaslar" ("the silent ones"), the writer singles out their principal state, silence and immobility, as the key feature: "Garchi yer ostida, indamaslar olamida yotganlar bir xil ko'rinishda bo'lsalar-da..." ("Although those who lie underground, in the world of the silent, look the same...") [1, 340].

The use of the component "olam" ("world") in this periphrasis is also noteworthy. "Indamaslar olami" denotes not simply the notion of the grave but another space set in opposition to the world of the living. For this reason, instead of a direct and harsh expression of the concept of death, a philosophical-figurative meaning arises in the unit.

The periphrasis "so'nggi ziyoratgoh" ("the final shrine") likewise expresses the concept of the grave euphemistically. "Ziyoratgoh" ("shrine", "place of pilgrimage") ordinarily denotes a sacred, revered place. The component "so'nggi" ("final") denotes a person's ultimate destination on life's path: "Keyin esa... so'nggi ziyoratgohga qarab jo'naymiz" ("Then... we set out toward the final shrine") [1, 354]. In this unit, in place of the meaning of the grave as an ordinary place, a philosophical conception of the final destination of human life is put forward.

The periphrasis "yog'och ot" ("the wooden horse") figuratively expresses the coffin in the burial process: "Xullas, keyin yog'och otga mindiradilar. Qabrga eltadilar. Ko'madilar..." ("In short, then they set him on the wooden horse. They carry him to the grave. They bury him...") [1, 354]. Here the outward form or function of the coffin is not stated directly; a metaphorical image is created by likening it to a "horse" ("ot"). The expression "yog'och otga mindirmoq" ("to set someone on the wooden horse") figuratively expresses a person's being carried toward the final destination and artistically softens the harshness of the phenomenon of death.

**"Ajalning soyasi"** ("the shadow of death") likewise avoids naming death directly and expresses its proximity and constant danger. The component "soya" ("shadow") signifies here that death is a danger that pursues human life: "...yo o'larini bilmay, yo qolarini bilmay, ajalning soyasida yashadi" ("...not knowing whether he would die or live on, he lived in the shadow of death") [1, 389]. Likewise, in the periphrasis "o'lim sharpasi" ("the specter of death"), it is not death itself but its perceptibility, its approach, and its fear-inspiring sign that are expressed. The lexeme "sharpa" ("specter") creates a vague and frightening image: "...yuragida kuchli xavotir uyg'onmasa, hovliqmasa, o'lim sharpasidan cho'chimasdi" ("...unless strong anxiety stirred in his heart and he grew flustered, he did not flinch at the specter of death") [2, 383].

**"O'limning shirin suvi"** ("the sweet water of death") is a unit that expresses death in a highly distinctive metaphorical form: "...hademay o'limning shirin suvini ichmog'i lozim" ("...before long he must drink the sweet water of death") [1, 480]. In this periphrasis, a figurative relation is established between the verb "ichmoq" ("to drink") and the concept of "death". Whereas drinking water is a natural and ordinary process, the phrase "o'limning shirin suvi" signifies that death is an inescapable fate. The use of the adjective "shirin" ("sweet"), in turn,

distances death from its customary negative evaluation and produces a complex philosophical-aesthetic meaning.

On the basis of the analyzed material, the euphemistic periphrases in the novel "Shaytanat" can be divided into several semantic groups. In particular, the units expressing the concepts of death and the grave, namely "indamaslar olami" ("the world of the silent"), "so'nggi ziyoratgoh" ("the final shrine"), "yog'och ot" ("the wooden horse"), "ajalning soyasi" ("the shadow of death"), "o'lim sharpasi" ("the specter of death"), and "o'limning shirin suvi" ("the sweet water of death"), form a separate semantic layer. In these periphrases, the phenomenon of death is not named directly but is expressed by means of such images as silence, the final destination, a journey, shadow, specter, and the water of death. As a result, alongside the meaning of death as a biological phenomenon, its philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic aspects also come to the fore. Spatial semantics plays an important role especially in the units "indamaslar olami" and "so'nggi ziyoratgoh". While the component "olam" makes it possible to imagine a space opposed to the world of the living, the lexeme "ziyoratgoh" lends the concept of the grave a tone of respect and sacredness. In the periphrasis "yog'och ot", the outward form of the coffin and the burial process are expressed through a metaphorical image, and a person's going to the final destination is likened to a journey. In the units "ajalning soyasi" and "o'lim sharpasi", it is not death itself but its approach, its danger, and the fear it arouses in the human psyche that appear as the primary semantic feature. "O'limning shirin suvi", in turn, creates a complex philosophical-aesthetic meaning by transferring death onto the image of a beverage.

**II. Periphrases expressing misfortune and psychological suffering**

In the text of the novel, one can observe that the severe trials and calamities that befall a person are likewise expressed through euphemistic periphrases. For example, in the phrase "kulfat bo'roni" ("the storm of calamity"), calamity is likened to a "storm": "Onalik baxti nimaligini endi ko'raman, deb turgan ayol kulfat bo'roniga duch kelganda uni qanday yupatish mumkin?" ("How can one console a woman who, thinking 'Now I shall see what the happiness of motherhood is', has run into the storm of calamity?") [2, 318]. A storm is a natural phenomenon that does not submit to human will, arrives suddenly, and brings great devastation. This feature is transferred onto the concept of "kulfat" ("calamity"). As a result, the unexpectedness of the misfortune that has befallen a person and the powerful psychological blow it delivers are expressed impressively.

In the periphrasis "abri balo" ("the cloud of misfortune"), too, misfortune is likened to a cloud: "Sharifning boshiga yog'ilayotgan abri balo ham o'tay deb qoldimi?" ("Is even the cloud of misfortune raining down on Sharif's head about to pass?") [1, 72]. "Abr" means "cloud", and "balo" means "misfortune". When used together with the verb "yog'ilmoq" ("to rain down"), "balo" is imagined as a natural phenomenon, like rain. In this way, the calamities that befall the character one after another are expressed figuratively.

**"Qurigan umid daraxti"** ("the withered tree of hope") is a metaphorical expression of the state of despair: "Lekin... qurigan umid daraxti qayta gullashi mumkinmikin?" ("But... can a withered tree of hope bloom again?") [2, 304]. In this periphrasis, hope is expressed as a tree and despair as the state of withering. "Blooming" ("gullash"), in turn, signifies the revival of hope. Thus, through a single periphrasis, the writer has succeeded in expressing the character's psychological state, inner experience, and attitude toward the future.

Euphemistic periphrases expressing misfortune and psychological suffering also occupy an important place in the novel. In units such as "kulfat bo'roni", "abri balo", and "qurigan umid daraxti", a person's grave experiences are linked with natural phenomena and plant imagery. In "kulfat bo'roni", the sudden arrival of misfortune and its powerful blow are expressed in the image of a storm; in "abri balo", the pouring down of misfortune is likened to rain or the movement of clouds. "Qurigan umid daraxti", in turn, expresses a person's despair through the withering of a tree while at the same time, by means of the component "gullash" ("blooming"), preserving the

possibility of hope's revival. Thus, these periphrases not only name a negative psychological state but also depict complex processes in the character's inner world.

**III. Periphrases expressing tyranny and negative social phenomena**

In Tohir Malik's "Shaytanat", concepts connected with tyranny and the criminal world are likewise conveyed through figurative naming. The periphrases "zulm daraxti" ("the tree of tyranny") and "zulm so'qmog'i" ("the path of tyranny") are among them: "Moskvada yangi zulm daraxti ekila boshlagandi" ("In Moscow a new tree of tyranny had begun to be planted") [2, 382]. Here the likening of tyranny to a "tree" signifies that it is a phenomenon that takes root and keeps expanding. Through such notions as "ekmoq" ("to plant"), "daraxt" ("tree"), and "ildiz otmoq" ("to take root"), a metaphorical link is formed with the development of tyranny.

**"Zulm so'qmog'i"** ("the path of tyranny"), in turn, is a figurative expression of the road of crime and violence: "Asadbek kengaytirgan zulm so'qmog'iga bu tirrancha ibtidoning o'zidayoq bezbetlarcha qadam bosgach, intihosi nima bo'lardi?!" ("Once this brat had shamelessly stepped, right at the very outset, onto the path of tyranny that Asadbek had widened, what would the outcome be?!") [2, 382]. The lexeme "so'qmoq" ("path") here denotes, rather than an ordinary road, a life path that a person has strayed onto and from which it is difficult to get out. Through this periphrastic unit, the process of entering the criminal world is artistically depicted.

**"Qonli shuhrat saroyi"** ("the bloody palace of fame") figuratively expresses a status, reputation, or power that has come into being on the basis of violence and crime: "Qanchalab odamlarning sho'rini quritish evaziga tiklangan qonli shuhrat saroyi..." ("The bloody palace of fame, erected at the cost of ruining countless people...") [2, 384]. In this periphrasis, "saroy" ("palace") appears as a symbol of power and grandeur, while the component "qonli" ("bloody") shows by what means this "fame" came about. As a result, beneath the ordinary notion of "fame" ("shuhrat"), a complex linguistic content connected with crime, violence, and human fates is fused.

To sum up, in the novel "Shaytanat", the periphrases expressing tyranny, crime, and negative social phenomena also form a distinctive semantic system. In units such as "zulm daraxti", "zulm so'qmog'i", "qonli shuhrat saroyi", and "tuhmat saroyining darvozalari" ("the gates of the palace of slander"), the development of social phenomena and their influence on human life are rendered artistically by means of spatial and motion imagery. In particular, in the phrase "zulm daraxti", such conceptual features as "ekmoq" ("to plant"), "daraxt" ("tree"), and "ildiz otmoq" ("to take root") are linked with the formation and expansion of tyranny in society. "Zulm so'qmog'i", in turn, expresses entering the road of crime and violence in the image of a path. In the periphrasis "qonli shuhrat saroyi", while "saroy" is an emblem of power and standing, the component "qonli" signifies that this standing has been formed at the expense of violence and human fates.

**IV. Euphemistic periphrases expressing psychological state**

Another important group of euphemistic periphrases comprises units expressing a person's inner experiences and psychological suffering. "Temir tirnoqlar hukmi" ("the dominion of iron claws") serves to express the character's intense psychological torment: "Asadbek bir zumgina ko'zlarini yumdi-yu, temir tirnoqlar hukmidagi qalb azobidan ingrab yubordi" ("Asadbek closed his eyes for just an instant and groaned from the anguish of a heart under the dominion of iron claws") [1, 579]. Here psychological torment is likened to the physical effect of claws. The lexeme "temir" ("iron"), in turn, intensifies the force and cruelty of the torment.

**"Xavotir tirnog'i"** ("the claw of anxiety") likewise figuratively expresses the effect of fear and anxiety on the human psyche: "...xavotir tirnog'i hukmiga tushishi shundan" ("...his falling under the dominion of the claw of anxiety stems from this") [2, 142]. The likening of anxiety to a "claw" ("tirnoq") shows that it is a psychological state that crushes a person from within and does not let go. In the periphrasis "g'azab iskanjasi" ("the vise of rage"), rage is portrayed as an "iskanja" ("vise"), that is, a squeezing, tormenting force: "G'azab iskanjasi uni bir oz xoli qo'ydi-yu, orqasiga o'girildi..." ("The vise of rage released him a little, and he turned around...") [1, 447].

This unit expresses the character's psychological state far more impressively than stating it directly as “he became enraged”.

In conclusion, periphrases expressing the human psychological state, such as “temir tirnoqlar hukmi” (“the dominion of iron claws”), “xavotir tirnog'i” (“the claw of anxiety”), and “g'azab iskanjasi” (“the vise of rage”), are likewise of great importance in shaping the figurative language of the novel. In these units, abstract psychological states are imagined through concrete physical actions and objects. Components such as “tirnoq” (“claw”), “temir” (“iron”), “iskanja” (“vise”), and “hukm” (“dominion”) make it possible to express impressively that psychological suffering, anxiety, and rage are forces that squeeze and torment a person from within. Through such periphrases, the character's psychological experience is expressed more figuratively and emotionally than through direct statements such as “he suffered”, “he became anxious”, or “he became enraged”.

**V. Euphemistic expression of the concepts of slander, illness, and the world**

The periphrasis “tuhmat saroyi” (“the palace of slander”) expresses the scale of slander and its gradual expansion: “So'kishlar poyoniga yetgach, tuhmat saroyining darvozalari ochildi” (“When the abuse had run its course, the gates of the palace of slander opened”) [2, 291]. Components such as “darvoza” (“gate”) and “saroy” (“palace”) turn slander, as it were, into a separate space. This lends the text figurativeness and drama. “Xastalar yotog'i” (“the quarters of the sick”), in turn, expresses a hospital or a place where patients lie in a softer, indirect form: “...xastalar yotog'iga qarab yurdi” (“...he walked toward the quarters of the sick”) [1, 14].

Units such as “tuhmat saroyi” and “xastalar yotog'i” show the potential of euphemistic periphrases in social-moral and medical themes. In “tuhmat saroyi”, slander is imagined as an independent space, and its gradual expansion is conveyed through the images of “gate” and “palace”. In the phrase “xastalar yotog'i”, in turn, a concept connected with illness and the hospital is expressed in a softer form, closer to human feeling.

The analysis shows that metaphorical transfer is an important device in the semantic structure of euphemistic periphrases. Death is expressed through the images of space, path, shadow, specter, and water; calamity through storm and cloud; despair through a withered tree; tyranny through a tree and a path; psychological suffering through claw and vise; and slander through a palace. This makes it possible to imagine abstract and psychological concepts through concrete images. At the same time, the meaning of periphrases is, in most cases, fully revealed precisely under the influence of context.

Another important aspect determining the artistic-semantic features of these units is that they generate multilayered meaning. For example, “o'lim sharpasi” (“the specter of death”) signifies not only death but also its approach and the fear it inspires; “qurigan umid daraxti” (“the withered tree of hope”) not only despair but also that hope existed before and the possibility of its revival; and “zulm daraxti” (“the tree of tyranny”) not only tyranny but also its taking root and spreading. Thus, a euphemistic periphrasis does not merely replace a single concept but also brings into the text additional semantic features connected with that concept.

Furthermore, euphemistic periphrases perform the functions of individualizing a character's speech, creating the emotional background of a particular situation, regulating the sharpness of artistic depiction, and prompting the reader to grasp the hidden meaning. For this reason, it is not sufficient to study them solely within the framework of lexical synonymy. Revealing their content requires a harmonious combination of semantic, contextual, stylistic, and pragmatic approaches.

Overall, the euphemistic periphrases used in Tohir Malik's novel “Shaytanat” are among the important linguistic devices that manifest the writer's individual artistic thinking and style of depiction. Through them, such complex concepts as life and death, misfortune and hope, tyranny and crime, psychological suffering, illness, and human relations are expressed not directly but in a

figurative, symbolic, and aesthetic form. Such units, while enriching the lexical wealth of the work, also enhance its emotional-expressive force.

In conclusion, the analysis carried out on the material of the novel “Shaytanat” shows that euphemistic periphrases in Uzbek literary discourse are not limited to being a means of softening meaning, but serve to create new semantic layers, clarify abstract concepts, reveal the character's psyche, impart an artistic evaluative meaning to social phenomena, and strengthen the aesthetic impact of the text. In this respect, studying euphemistic periphrases more deeply in Uzbek linguistics from lexical-semantic, linguopoetic, and pragmatic perspectives is one of the pressing scientific directions.

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