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COMMUNICATIVE AND PRAGMATIC POTENTIAL OF SPEECH DEVICES IN THE LANGUAGE OF UZBEK FOLK EPICS

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Abstract: This study examines the communicative and pragmatic potential of speech devices in the language of Uzbek folk epics from sociolinguistic, linguopragmatic, and linguocultural perspectives. Uzbek folk epics are regarded as valuable sources of historical and cultural memory, reflecting the social experience, moral values, customs, traditions, communicative practices, and worldview of the Uzbek people. Particular attention is given to speech acts and communicative forms such as requests, blessings, curses, commands, forms of address, advice, dialogues, and monologues. The study demonstrates that the choice and use of these speech devices are closely associated with the social status, communicative role, psychological state, and intentions of the characters. Paremiological and phraseological units are analyzed as culturally significant linguistic resources that encode collective experience and traditional value systems. The analysis also reveals the role of emotionally expressive vocabulary, repetition, parallel constructions, oaths, and blessings in increasing the persuasive and emotional impact of epic discourse. The findings indicate that the language of Uzbek folk epics functions not only as an artistic medium but also as an important sociolinguistic and cultural resource through which social relations, communicative norms, moral values, and national mentality are represented and transmitted across generations.

Keywords: Uzbek folk epics, epic discourse, sociolinguistics, linguopragmatics, linguoculturology, speech acts, communicative intention, speech situation, social status, communicative culture, social consciousness, national mentality, paremiological units, phraseological units, forms of address, request, blessing, curse, command, dialogue, monologue, speech expressiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Uzbek folk epics constitute one of the most important genres of oral literary heritage and represent a significant repository of the historical and cultural memory of the Uzbek people. They preserve information about traditional ways of life, customs, moral principles, social relations, national values, and patterns of collective thinking. Therefore, the study of folk epics should extend beyond their artistic and aesthetic dimensions and encompass their anthropological, sociolinguistic, and linguocultural significance.

Language in folk epics serves as a means of representing sociocultural reality. The speech of characters reflects their social roles, interpersonal relationships, psychological states, and positions within the social hierarchy[1]. Lexical units referring to social status, forms of address, proverbs, sayings, idioms, blessings, curses, commands, and advice provide evidence of historically established patterns of communication.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, epic discourse is closely connected with the social environment in which the represented characters interact. The differences in their speech are frequently determined by age, gender, social position, authority, and communicative roles. Thus,

[1] Fishman, J. A. Sociolinguistics: A Brief Introduction. – Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1971.

the speech of a khan, bek, commander, elder, parent, young man, or ordinary member of the community may demonstrate different patterns of communication.

The linguopragmatic study of folk epics is particularly relevant because speech units in epic discourse are not used merely for narrative purposes. They perform specific communicative functions and are intended to influence the addressee. Requests may express dependence or a need for assistance; blessings may communicate goodwill and emotional support; curses may express anger and condemnation; commands may demonstrate authority; and forms of address may establish solidarity, respect, or social distance.

Another important feature of epic discourse is the extensive use of proverbs, sayings, idioms, and other paremiological and phraseological units. These linguistic resources condense the collective experience of the community and transmit culturally significant values such as honor, dignity, loyalty, friendship, justice, courage, and patriotism.

Accordingly, the present study aims to investigate the communicative and pragmatic potential of speech devices in Uzbek folk epics and to demonstrate their role in representing social relations, cultural values, communicative norms, and the national mentality of the Uzbek people.

METHODS

The study employs an integrated methodological framework combining descriptive, sociolinguistic, linguopragmatic, semantic, contextual, linguocultural, and ethnolinguistic approaches.

The descriptive method was used to identify, classify, and systematize the principal speech devices occurring in Uzbek folk epics. Particular attention was paid to requests, blessings, curses, commands, forms of address, advice, dialogues, monologues, proverbs, sayings, idioms, and emotionally expressive lexical units. The sociolinguistic approach was applied to examine the relationship between character speech and social variables such as status, age, gender, authority, and communicative role. This approach makes it possible to identify how linguistic choices reflect the hierarchical and interpersonal relationships represented in epic narratives.

The linguopragmatic method was used to determine the communicative intentions of speakers and the intended effects of their utterances on addressees. Speech acts were analyzed according to their communicative functions, including requesting, blessing, cursing, commanding, addressing, advising, encouraging, warning, and expressing emotional attitudes.

The semantic and contextual methods were employed to determine the meanings of lexical, phraseological, and paremiological units within specific communicative situations. Particular attention was given to cases in which the contextual meaning of an expression extends beyond its literal meaning and acquires additional pragmatic or evaluative significance.

The linguocultural and ethnolinguistic approaches were used to analyze culturally marked concepts such as honor, dignity, loyalty, people, homeland, and justice. These concepts were examined as linguistic representations of the national worldview, historical memory, moral values, and cultural experience of the Uzbek people.

The combination of these methods makes it possible to consider epic language as a multidimensional phenomenon in which linguistic form, social context, communicative intention, cultural meaning, and emotional impact interact.

3. RESULTS.

3.1. The Sociolinguistic Dimension of Epic Discourse.

The lexical units used in Uzbek folk epics are closely associated with the social structure and cultural environment represented in the narratives. Terms such as khan, bek, and commander indicate hierarchical and political positions, while words such as young man, girl, elder, and parent reflect social and family roles.

Thus, lexical choice contributes to the representation of social organization. The speech of characters also reflects differences in authority and social distance. Characters occupying higher

positions tend to employ authoritative and directive forms, whereas socially dependent characters more frequently use requests, pleas, respectful forms of address, and expressions of deference.

Forms of address constitute an especially important sociolinguistic resource. Expressions such as “Hey, young man!”, “O my people!”, “O young men!”, and “O friends and fellow believers!” reveal relationships between speakers and addressees. Depending on the context, they may express respect, solidarity, emotional closeness, collective identity, or social distance:

1. Paremiological units also encode social norms and collective experience. Expressions emphasizing the authority of elders, the importance of honor, loyalty to one's community, and moral responsibility demonstrate how social values become linguistically conventionalized[2].

2. For example, statements such as “A young man's honor is the honor of his people” connect individual morality with collective responsibility. Similarly, expressions emphasizing the authority of elders demonstrate the traditional communicative hierarchy within the community.

Phraseological units contribute to the same process. Expressions equivalent to “to find a place in someone's heart,” “to be experienced and wise,” and “to spread one's wings”[3] encode culturally recognizable evaluations of interpersonal relationships, experience, and independence.

Consequently, sociolinguistic analysis demonstrates that the language of Uzbek folk epics functions as a linguistic representation of social organization, interpersonal relations, moral expectations, and communicative norms.

3.2. Paremias, Idioms, and the Representation of Cultural Values. Proverbs, sayings, and idioms occupy a particularly important position in the communicative structure of Uzbek folk epics. They represent condensed forms of collective knowledge and provide culturally established ways of evaluating human behavior.

The value system represented through these units includes such concepts as honor, dignity, loyalty, friendship, courage, justice, homeland, and social responsibility.

Expressions such as “A true man keeps his word” emphasize the value of reliability and moral responsibility. Similarly, statements concerning honor and dignity establish these concepts as fundamental criteria of personal identity and social evaluation.

Idiomatic expressions provide a figurative means of communicating similar values. For example, an expression equivalent to “honey flowed from his tongue” characterizes a person as pleasant and persuasive in speech, while “his mouth is seasoned” describes an experienced and wise individual.

These units perform more than an aesthetic function. They provide speakers with culturally recognizable communicative formulas that allow complex moral judgments to be expressed concisely and effectively.

From a linguocultural perspective, paremias and idioms can therefore be regarded as verbalized cultural codes. They preserve elements of collective historical experience and transmit them from one generation to another.

3.3. Speech Acts and Communicative Intentions.

One of the most significant findings of the study is that speech acts in folk epics are closely related to the communicative intentions and psychological states of the characters:

Requests and pleas generally occur when a character seeks assistance, protection, forgiveness, or salvation. For example: “O Almighty Creator, have mercy on my condition. Who else is there besides You? Have mercy on my condition.” Another example is: “Hear my plea, O Almighty One,

[2] Kuntug‘mish Dostoni. Xalq Og‘zaki Ijodi. Tashkent: G‘afur G‘ulom Publishing House of Literature and Art, 135 p.

[3] The cited source. – P. 135.

and deliver me from these troubles."[4] Such utterances reveal the speaker's helplessness, hope, emotional distress, and dependence on the addressee.

Requests addressed to other characters may also demonstrate social hierarchy. A socially subordinate character may employ a respectful or pleading form, whereas a person of authority may express the same desired action through a command.

Blessings express positive intentions, goodwill, affection, and spiritual support. Examples include:"My child, may Allah be your helper!", "May your path be open!", "May Allah protect you!", "May your golden head remain safe!"[5].

Such expressions have both emotional and pragmatic functions. They strengthen interpersonal bonds, provide psychological support, and communicate culturally recognized forms of goodwill.

Curses represent the opposite pole of emotional and evaluative communication. They may express anger, hatred, condemnation, dissatisfaction, or a desire for punishment. Expressions such as "May your name be extinguished!", "May you suffer!", or "May your head never be safe!"[6] convey strong negative evaluation.

From a linguocultural perspective, curses are significant because they reveal the moral boundaries established by the community. They are directed primarily toward individuals or forces perceived as violating socially accepted norms.

Commands are closely associated with authority and social status. They are particularly characteristic of the speech of khans, beks, commanders, and other socially powerful characters. Expressions such as "Bring them out!" and "Let your swords flash!" not only require action but also demonstrate the speaker's authority, determination, and leadership.

Consequently, commands perform both an illocutionary function and a social-indexical function: they indicate what the speaker wants the addressee to do while simultaneously revealing the relationship between the participants.

Forms of Address serve several communicative purposes. They may attract attention, establish contact, express respect or affection, create solidarity, or mobilize a group. Examples such as **"**Hey, Avazjon!", "O beautiful one!", "O people!", "O young men!" and "O friends and fellow believers!"[7] demonstrate how address forms participate in the organization of social interaction.

3.4. Dialogues and Monologues as Pragmatic and Psychological Resources.

Dialogues in folk epics perform several interconnected functions. They advance the plot, establish interpersonal relationships, intensify conflicts, and reveal the psychological states of the characters.

The dialogue between a hero and an enemy often represents a confrontation between contrasting moral positions. The enemy's arrogant or threatening speech may be opposed by the hero's confident and decisive response. Through this contrast, the listener is encouraged to distinguish between justice and injustice, courage and cowardice, or loyalty and betrayal.

Parent-child dialogues frequently contain blessings, advice, warnings, and expressions of affection. Such dialogues reflect the transmission of social and moral experience from one generation to another.

[4] The Birth of Go'ro'g'li. Khorezm Epics. Urgench: "Khorezm" Publishing House, 2004. – P. 25.
[5] The cited work. – P. 27.
[6] The Birth of Go'ro'g'li. Khorezm Epics. Urgench: "Khorezm" Publishing House, 2004. – P. 25.
[7] Rustamkhan. Folk Epic. Performer: Fozil Yo'ldosh o'g'li. Tashkent, 2007, p. 131.

Dialogues between lovers commonly involve promises, pleas, expressions of loyalty, and emotional appeals. These speech patterns reveal the characters' feelings and strengthen interpersonal bonds[8].

Monologues, in contrast, provide direct access to the character's inner world. A hero's self-address before battle, for example, may reveal courage, fear, determination, patriotism, or a sense of responsibility.

An expression such as "I will sacrifice my life for my people" represents not only an individual emotional state but also a culturally valued model of heroic behavior.

Monologues are often reinforced by phraseological and paremiological units, which allow the character to formulate complex moral or emotional positions in concise and culturally recognizable forms.

3.5. Speech Expressiveness and Pragmatic Impact.

The communicative effectiveness of epic discourse is strengthened by emotionally expressive vocabulary, repetition, parallel constructions, oaths, blessings, idioms, and paremias.

Emotionally marked words such as "my soul," "people and homeland," "honor and dignity," and "homeland" have a strong affective potential. They activate culturally significant concepts and intensify the emotional response of the listener.

Repetition is another important stylistic and pragmatic device. The repeated use of a word or phrase directs the listener's attention to the central message and increases emotional intensity. For example: "Let the young men mount their horses, let them mount!"[9] The repetition conveys urgency, enthusiasm, and collective mobilization. Parallel constructions perform a similar function by creating rhythm, semantic emphasis, and emotional coherence.

Oaths and blessings also contribute to pragmatic intensity. Expressions such as "Even if I give up my life, I will never give up my honor" demonstrate determination and commitment to moral principles.

Speech devices may perform several functions simultaneously:

1. **Motivational function** – encouraging courage, determination, and patriotism.
2. **Educational function** – transmitting moral principles and social norms.
3. **Warning function** – discouraging inappropriate or immoral behavior.
4. **Sympathy-evoking function** – generating compassion toward a suffering character.
5. **Evaluative function** – expressing approval or condemnation.
6. **Mobilizing function** – uniting listeners around a common objective.
7. **Emotional function** – intensifying feelings such as love, anger, loyalty, fear, or hatred[10].

These functions demonstrate that speech devices in folk epics are integral components of communicative interaction rather than merely decorative elements of poetic language.

DISCUSSION.

The results demonstrate that speech devices in Uzbek folk epics possess considerable communicative and pragmatic potential. Their function extends beyond the transmission of propositional information: they influence the addressee's emotions, shape attitudes, establish interpersonal relations, and regulate social interaction[11].

Dialogues provide a particularly effective environment for pragmatic interaction. Contrasting speech strategies used by heroes and antagonists create dramatic tension and establish competing

[8] Mo'minov, S. The Sociolinguistic Features of Uzbek Communicative Behavior. Dissertation Abstract. Tashkent, 2000, p. 44.

[9] Rayhon Arab. Xorazm Epics. Urgench: "Xorazm" Publishing House, 2004, p. 92.

[10] Hojiyev, A. et al. Explanatory Dictionary of Active Words of the Modern Uzbek Language. Tashkent: Sharq Publishing and Printing Joint-Stock Company, Main Editorial Office, 2001, p. 269.

[11] https://uz.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sotsiolingvistika

moral positions. The communicative behavior of the characters therefore contributes directly to the ethical interpretation of the narrative.

Monologues, meanwhile, intensify the psychological dimension of epic discourse. By articulating their internal conflicts, hopes, fears, and resolutions, characters establish an emotional connection with the listener.

The analysis also demonstrates the importance of phraseological and paremiological resources. Because proverbs and idioms are based on culturally shared knowledge, they possess a high degree of communicative economy. A short paremiological expression can communicate a complex moral judgment without requiring extensive explanation.

The pragmatic force of these units is determined by context. The same linguistic form may perform different functions depending on the speaker, addressee, social relationship, communicative situation, and intended outcome[12]. For instance, a form of address may express respect in one context but solidarity or emotional closeness in another. Similarly, a command may function not simply as an instruction but also as an assertion of authority.

The findings are consistent with the broader sociolinguistic understanding that language reflects and simultaneously reproduces social relations. In folk epics, speech behavior is an important mechanism through which culturally accepted models of interaction are represented and transmitted.

The study also confirms the close relationship between language and national mentality. Concepts such as honor, dignity, loyalty, homeland, justice, and courage are repeatedly activated through speech acts, paremias, idioms, and emotionally expressive vocabulary. Their recurrent use demonstrates that epic discourse serves as a repository of culturally significant communicative practices.

Thus, the communicative-pragmatic analysis of Uzbek folk epics makes it possible to examine language simultaneously as a means of artistic representation, social interaction, cultural transmission, and psychological influence.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that speech devices in Uzbek folk epics constitute a complex system of communicative, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and linguocultural resources. Requests, blessings, curses, commands, forms of address, advice, dialogues, and monologues perform specific communicative functions and reveal the social position, psychological state, intentions, and interpersonal relationships of the characters.

Paremiological and phraseological units are particularly important because they preserve and transmit collective experience, moral principles, and culturally established patterns of evaluation. Through concepts such as honor, dignity, loyalty, friendship, homeland, justice, and courage, epic discourse reflects the national mentality and social consciousness of the Uzbek people.

The study further demonstrates that emotionally expressive vocabulary, repetition, parallel constructions, oaths, and blessings significantly enhance the persuasive and emotional impact of epic speech. These devices motivate, warn, educate, evoke sympathy, intensify emotional reactions, and mobilize listeners toward a particular goal.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, differences in character speech reflect social hierarchy, age, gender, authority, and interpersonal distance. From a linguopragmatic perspective, speech devices reveal communicative intentions and intended effects. From a linguocultural and ethnolinguistic perspective, they encode the historical experience, worldview, and value system of the people.

[12] https://in-academy.uz/index.php/ejar/article/view/44870

Therefore, Uzbek folk epics should be studied not only as artistic and poetic works but also as valuable sociolinguistic and cultural documents. Their language provides important evidence for understanding the historical development of communicative culture, social consciousness, national mentality, and culturally specific patterns of interpersonal interaction.

The communicative and pragmatic study of folk-epic language consequently offers a productive interdisciplinary perspective for Uzbek linguistics, particularly in the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, linguoculturology, ethnolinguistics, and the study of oral literary heritage.

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