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A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL EXPRESSIONS OF FEAR IN AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY BY THEODORE DREISER AND TUSHDA KECHGAN UMRLAR BY UTKIR HOSHIMOV

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Abstract: This article examines how selected passages from Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy and O'tkir Hoshimov's Tushda kechgan umrlar encode fear through lexical naming, bodily description, and context-dependent evaluation. The study employs qualitative contrastive close reading of the English and Uzbek originals. Its evidence consists of explicitly identified passages rather than a frequency-based corpus. The analysis distinguishes words that name fear from expressions that represent its perceived causes, physical manifestations, or interpersonal management. Both texts connect threatening interpretations of events with involuntary bodily responses. Differences emerge in the particular linguistic forms and discourse situations examined: Dreiser combines explicit emotional categorisation with descriptions of physical inhibition, whereas Hoshimov's selected scenes link apprehensive movement, vocal instability, and reassurance. These are passage-level findings, not generalisations about national psychology or the two languages as wholes. The article argues that functional comparison is more reliable than treating superficially similar emotion expressions as exact equivalents. It also shows why literal sensations, figurative bodily imagery, and pragmatic uses of fear vocabulary require separate treatment.

Keywords:contrastive linguistics, fear, lexical semantics, literary stylistics, embodied emotion, anger, cold, physical exertion.

Fear presents a useful problem for contrastive literary linguistics because a text may name an emotion, describe its bodily consequences, or invite the reader to infer it without naming it. A comparison limited to dictionary equivalents overlooks these different modes of representation. Conversely, a discussion confined to tragic events risks becoming thematic literary criticism rather than linguistic analysis. The present article therefore asks how particular lexical choices make fear identifiable and how comparable functions are realised in English and Uzbek fictional discourse.

The material comes from Dreiser's An American Tragedy and Hoshimov's Tushda kechgan umrlar. Both novels permit examination of threatened security, but their narratives should not be reduced to a single psychological pattern. The comparison concerns selected linguistic evidence, not an assertion that their protagonists, historical settings, or moral positions are equivalent. The Uzbek title is retained throughout to avoid presenting an unverified English title as that of an established translation.

Three questions guide the analysis. How do the selected passages distinguish the naming of fear from the description of its effects? Which expressions connect emotion with bodily or vocal behaviour? How does the discourse setting change the function of an apparently equivalent fear expression? The contribution is a small, source-traceable comparison that makes its analytical decisions explicit. It does not claim to establish the first comparison of these authors or to provide an exhaustive inventory of their emotion vocabulary.

Wierzbicka (1999) examines emotion through language and culturally shaped ways of speaking, questioning the assumption that familiar English emotion categories are automatically

universal. For the present study, this supplies a methodological caution: English fear is a starting label for comparison, not a ready-made definition that every Uzbek expression must reproduce. Equivalence must be considered in context, including the perceived threat, the experiencer's response, and the communicative purpose of the utterance.

Kövecses (1990) places fear within a broader investigation of emotion concepts and figurative conceptualisation. This perspective directs attention to bodily imagery alongside explicit emotion terms. Nevertheless, an embodied description is not automatically metaphorical. A voice can literally tremble, while an image of an internal organ leaving its normal position requires a different analysis. Both may support an inference of fear, but they do so through different relations between language and experience.

The metaphor identification procedure proposed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) offers an explicit approach to identifying metaphorically used words. Here it serves as a methodological reference for distinguishing contextual meaning from a more basic physical interpretation. The article does not claim to implement the complete procedure with independent annotators. Instead, it uses transparent close-reading judgements and records uncertainty where literal bodily experience remains possible.

Literary stylistics also requires attention to who names or interprets an emotion. Leech and Short (2007) provide a linguistic framework for analysing fictional prose, while Semino (2007) connects the representation of fictional minds with cognitive and pragmatic approaches. These perspectives help separate a narrator's description, a character's immediate speech, and an imagined instruction. The same lexical item can perform different work in these environments. Consequently, word meaning and discourse function are examined together without treating one as a substitute for the other.

The English source is volume two of the 1925 Boni and Liveright edition of An American Tragedy, consulted through Project Gutenberg's electronic transcription. Citations specify book and chapter because electronic display pages are unstable. The Uzbek source is the 2019 Ilm-ziyo-zakovat edition of Tushda kechgan umrlar, whose imprint identifies a 240-page volume. Citations refer to printed page numbers, not the PDF viewer's page count. The relevant scanned pages were checked visually. English glosses of Uzbek expressions below are analytical translations, not quotations from a published translation.

The purposive sample consists of Dreiser's Book Two, Chapter XLV, and Book Three, Chapters VI and VIII, together with Hoshimov's pages 12–13 and 18–19. Selection was based on the presence of identifiable fear expressions and sufficient surrounding context to distinguish naming, bodily manifestation, and interpersonal response. These passages provide comparable functions, not matching plots. The study makes no claims about the relative frequency of expressions across either complete novel.

Each selected expression was examined for its lexical form, contextual meaning, experiencer, immediate stimulus, and discourse function. Explicit fear naming was separated from behaviour interpreted as evidence of fear. Bodily expressions were assessed for literal plausibility before a figurative reading was proposed. Possible alternative explanations, especially anger, cold, physical exertion, and surprise, were retained where the surrounding narrative did not eliminate them. This prevents every emotionally charged movement from being classified as fear.

The common basis of comparison is the representation or management of a perceived threat. It allows a multiword Uzbek construction to be compared with an English phrase without requiring identical grammar. The resulting observations are qualitative and interpretive. No experimental participants, statistical significance tests, inter-rater agreement scores, or numerical corpus findings are reported.

In Dreiser's woodland episode, an unexpected sound interrupts Clyde's movement after Roberta's death. The narrator combines "cold sweat" with "rigid and motionless with fear"

(Dreiser, 1925, Book Three, Chapter VI). The latter phrase supplies an explicit emotional explanation for the physical state. Without the final prepositional phrase, stillness could indicate caution, exhaustion, or deliberate concealment. The naming of fear narrows that interpretive range.

The two adjectives are related but not redundant. One suggests bodily stiffness; the other denotes the absence of movement. Their coordination presents emotional disturbance through both muscular condition and interrupted action. The sweat description adds a bodily accompaniment, but it should not independently be treated as proof of metaphor. Physiological perspiration is possible in the represented situation. The linguistic effect depends on the combination of symptom, posture, and explicit emotional attribution.

Hoshimov uses "qo'rqa-pisa" when Shahnoza looks into unfamiliar accommodation and immediately withdraws (Hoshimov, 2019, p. 12). The contextual gloss is apprehensively. This paired expression characterises the manner of an action rather than presenting an abstract emotional noun. Fear is therefore built into the description of how the character approaches a space. The contrast with Dreiser's example concerns the selected constructions: emotional causation attached to a bodily state in one case and apprehensive manner attached to movement in the other.

This distinction should not be promoted into a claim that English names emotions while Uzbek merely implies them. Both texts also contain direct fear vocabulary. The relevant result is that comparable emotional information can be distributed differently across the local phrase. A contrastive account must preserve that distribution instead of replacing every instance with the same English label.

The same Uzbek episode describes Dilya speaking with "ovozi titrab", glossed as her voice trembling, after an unsettling sound (Hoshimov, 2019, p. 12). A vocal property makes distress perceptible to others. The expression is compatible with literal trembling and therefore supports a metonymic reading: an observable manifestation gives access to an emotional state. Its identification as fear depends on the surrounding episode, not on trembling as an emotion-specific sign.

A comparable caution applies to the description of Rustam's shaking hands during the wedding disturbance on page 18. The context includes anger, so shaking alone cannot be securely coded as fear. This negative control matters methodologically. A search for bodily vocabulary would retrieve both passages, but a careful reader should not assign them the same emotional category solely because they share a movement pattern.

On page 19, Shahnoza's hurried pursuit is accompanied by "Yuragi qinidan chiqqudek", approximately her heart almost bursting out (Hoshimov, 2019). The organ is imaginatively displaced beyond its normal containment. Unlike the vocal example, the image cannot be read simply as an ordinary visible symptom. It intensifies bodily arousal through a figurative possibility. Yet the situation also involves hurried movement and alarm for another person; the expression should therefore be interpreted as fear-related arousal rather than an exclusively fear-denoting equivalent.

Dreiser's arrest scene offers a different image, "blood to run cold with fear" (1925, Book Three, Chapter VIII). The coldness is connected explicitly with the emotion and with the interruption of movement. This differs from the Uzbek wedding scene, where cold water is physically poured onto people. The presence of temperature vocabulary in both passages does not establish a shared metaphor. One expression figuratively construes an internal response; the other describes an external event that may provoke a response. Source-domain resemblance must not override contextual meaning.

Hoshimov's "Qo'rqmang" is glossed as do not be afraid (2019, p. 13). Rustam uses it after identifying the source of Shahnoza's nocturnal fright as a mouse. The negative imperative does more than report emotion: it attempts to alter another person's response. Its force is supported by

an explanation that reduces uncertainty. Lexical fear naming thus participates in reassurance, and the addressee's changing interpretation of the stimulus is central to its function.

Dreiser also uses "Do not fear!" in the imagined instructions associated with Clyde's plan (1925, Book Two, Chapter XLV). Its grammatical resemblance to the Uzbek reassurance is clear, but its discourse role is different. The English instruction occurs within an imagined programme of action that suppresses hesitation. It is not offered by a reassuring companion who has established that a harmless stimulus has been misunderstood.

This pair demonstrates why translation equivalence does not guarantee pragmatic equivalence. Both forms negate a fear predicate and direct a response, yet the relationships between speaker, addressee, knowledge, and action differ. The analyst should therefore distinguish lexical correspondence from the moral and interpersonal work performed by the utterance. Nothing in the imperative form alone determines whether it comforts, pressures, or encourages dangerous conduct.

Comparison across analytical dimensions

Table 1 summarises the comparison without implying quantitative representativeness. The entries identify the function of the selected evidence and the limits of each inference.

Dimension	Dreiser passages	Hoshimov passages	Interpretive limit
Explicit naming	Emotional cause attached to physical inhibition	Apprehensive manner and a fear-based directive	Different local constructions, not exclusive language patterns
Bodily representation	Sweat, stiffness, and internal coldness	Vocal trembling and intensified cardiac imagery	Bodily change alone does not uniquely identify fear
Threat interpretation	Uncertain sound and approaching authority	Unfamiliar surroundings, sound, and interpersonal disturbance	Similar mechanisms do not make situations equivalent
Response management	Imagined instruction suppressing hesitation	Reassurance following stimulus identification	Comparable wording can have different pragmatic functions

The clearest commonality is the interaction between an interpretation of danger and a representation of bodily change. In both sets of passages, fear becomes legible through a relation between situation, language, and response. A lexical inventory can identify candidate expressions, but it cannot by itself establish what those expressions mean at a particular moment. The comparison consequently supports a layered approach in which explicit naming, bodily manifestation, and discourse function are recorded separately.

The most useful differences concern textual organisation rather than national character. In the selected Dreiser passages, emotional labels accompany detailed physical description and anxious interpretation. In the selected Hoshimov scenes, apprehensive action and audible distress are also connected with conversational intervention. These observations describe the chosen evidence. They do not establish that one author is consistently more explicit, that one language is intrinsically more emotional, or that all speakers share a single cultural model.

The findings have a practical implication for analytical translation. Replacing a figurative bodily expression with a general statement of fear may preserve broad emotional content while removing intensity or embodied perspective. Conversely, a literal rendering may preserve anatomy but distort the idiomatic force of the original. Translation commentary should therefore distinguish

the experiencer's emotion from the particular lexical mechanism through which the text presents it. The brief glosses in this article serve explanation rather than literary recreation.

Context also prevents false positives. Literal cold water is not equivalent to figurative internal coldness. Shaking associated with anger cannot automatically be added to a fear inventory. An imperative containing a fear verb can concern the regulation of emotion rather than its current presence. These distinctions are particularly important if the project is later extended into corpus research, where an unqualified keyword count could combine semantically and pragmatically different cases.

The study is limited by purposive selection, the small number of passages, and the absence of independent annotation. It cannot establish stylistic predominance or language-wide lexical differences. A larger investigation should define balanced sampling criteria, preserve edition-specific locators, and classify ambiguous instances separately. Independent review would be needed before reporting agreement statistics. The present analysis nevertheless offers a reproducible set of textual observations that can inform such a study without supplying invented numerical certainty.

The selected passages show that fear is expressed through more than direct emotional vocabulary. Lexical naming interacts with descriptions of movement, bodily sensation, voice, and attempts to regulate another person's response. Functional similarities coexist with differences in imagery, grammatical distribution, and pragmatic purpose. The strongest contrastive claim is therefore local: comparable emotional meanings are constructed through distinguishable linguistic choices in identifiable passages. Keeping those choices separate from plot equivalence and national generalisation provides a sound basis for further English–Uzbek research on literary emotion.

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