FILOLOGIYA VA PEDAGOGIKA

2026-yil
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O‘ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI MAKTABGACHA VA MAKTAB TA’LIMI VAZIRLIGINING
ILMIY-METODIK ELEKTRON JURNALI

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FILOLOGIYA VA PEDAGOGIKA

O‘ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI MAKTABGACHA VA MAKTAB TA'LIMI VAZIRLIGINING ILMIY-METODIK ELEKTRON JURNALI

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Laylo ODILOVA,
Independent Researcher Tashkent

IRONY AND SARCASM IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERARY DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE PRAGMATIC AND STYLISTIC STUDY

Annotation. This study presents a comparative pragmatic and stylistic analysis of irony and sarcasm in Uzbek and English literary discourse. It investigates the relationship between literal expression and intended evaluation, the role of context and cultural knowledge, and the stronger confrontational force of sarcasm. The findings distinguish universal mechanisms from culture-specific stylistic patterns.
Keywords: irony, sarcasm, literary discourse, pragmatics, stylistics, cultural context, translation.
Annotation. Ushbu maqolada o'zbek va ingliz badiiy diskursida iroya va sarkazm qiyosiy-pragmatik hamda stilistik jihatdan o'rganiladi. Unda kontekstual interpretatsiya, kommunikativ niyat, baholovchilik va madaniy bilimlar tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot umumiy mexanizmlar va milliy-madaniy xususiyatlarni ochib berib, irohani bilvosita baholash va obraz yaratish vositasi sifatida yoritadi.
Kalit so'zlar: iroya, sarkazm, badiiy diskurs, pragmatika, stilistika, qiyosiy tahlil, implitsit ma'no.
Аннотация. В статье в сопоставительном аспекте исследуются ирония и сарказм в узбекском и английском художественном дискурсе. Анализируются контекстуальная интерпретация, коммуникативное намерение, оценочность и культурные знания. Выявляются общие механизмы и национально обусловленные способы реализации иронии как средства косвенной оценки и характеристики персонажей.
Ключевые слова: ирония, сарказм, художественный дискурс, прагматика, стилистика, сопоставительный анализ, имплицитное значение.

Literary discourse allows writers to communicate not only through direct statements but also through meanings that are implied, context-dependent, or deliberately inconsistent with the literal wording of an utterance. Irony is one of the principal devices through which such indirect meaning is constructed, while sarcasm commonly represents a sharper and more openly evaluative form of ironic communication.

Irony cannot be adequately described as simply "saying the opposite" of what one means. Its interpretation depends on the interaction of linguistic form, situational context, communicative intention, the relationship between interlocutors, and the reader's cultural knowledge. Consequently, irony is simultaneously a pragmatic phenomenon and a stylistic resource [1: 2].

The relevance of comparing Uzbek and English literary discourse lies in the fact that both traditions employ irony and sarcasm to perform such functions as characterization, social criticism, humour, and indirect evaluation, while the linguistic and cultural conditions of their realization may differ. A comparative approach therefore needs to examine not only formal correspondences but also communicative effect.

The aim of this study is to identify the pragmatic and stylistic mechanisms of irony and sarcasm in Uzbek and English literary discourse and to determine their common and culture-specific features.

The objectives are to clarify the pragmatic distinction between irony and sarcasm; analyse the role of context in the interpretation of ironic meaning; compare major strategies of ironic representation in Uzbek and English literary texts; and consider the implications of these findings for literary translation.

The methodological basis of the study combines comparative, contextual, pragmatic, stylistic, and discourse-analytic methods. The novelty of the research lies in treating irony as a three-stage interpretive process: literal expression, contextual incongruity, and inferred evaluation. This model makes it possible to compare literary examples without reducing irony to a purely lexical phenomenon.

From a pragmatic perspective, irony emerges when the literal meaning of an utterance does not fully correspond to the evaluation or communicative intention recoverable from context. Such incongruity, however, is not sufficient by itself. The reader must recognize that the discrepancy is communicatively meaningful and infer an intended interpretation.

Grice's theory of conversational implicature provides an important foundation for understanding such indirect communication [3]. When a speaker appears to depart from an expected conversational norm, the hearer may search for an additional meaning that makes the utterance relevant to the situation. Irony can therefore be interpreted as a form of meaning construction in which the literal proposition remains accessible while contextual information guides the reader toward an implied evaluation.

A useful analytical sequence is:

literal expression → contextual incongruity → inferred evaluation.

The first stage concerns the conventional meaning of the words. The second arises when that meaning conflicts with the situation, previous discourse, or the speaker's observable attitude. The third is the reader's reconstruction of the intended evaluation. This sequence is particularly useful in literary discourse because the narrator may deliberately postpone explicit evaluation and allow the reader to infer it.

In English literary discourse, irony frequently functions as a mechanism of social observation and characterization. Jane Austen's narrative practice, for example, often creates a distance between a character's apparent self-presentation and the reader's understanding of that character. The ironic effect does not necessarily depend on an isolated word. It may develop through the contrast between a character's statement, the surrounding narrative information, and subsequent events.

Jonathan Swift offers a more openly satirical model. In A Modest Proposal, the apparently reasonable tone of the proposal is placed against an ethically shocking subject matter [4]. The resulting irony is therefore constructed at the level of the whole discourse rather than through a single lexical reversal. The reader is required to detect the incompatibility between the calm rhetorical surface and the moral implications of the proposal.

This demonstrates an important feature of English literary irony: it may operate through narrative distance and structural incongruity. The author does not always announce the critical position directly; instead, the reader is invited to recognize the discrepancy and formulate the evaluation independently.

Uzbek literary discourse also employs irony through contextual incongruity, indirect evaluation, humorous exaggeration, and socially recognizable forms of speech. In dialogue, a character may use apparent praise to express criticism, or a familiar expression may acquire an ironic

meaning because it is deliberately placed in an unsuitable situation. The interpretation of such expressions is strongly connected with social relations, speech etiquette, age, status, and shared cultural knowledge.

Abdulla Qodiriy's literary dialogues demonstrate how indirect evaluation may contribute to characterization and the representation of social relationships. The difference between what a character says and what the broader narrative allows the reader to understand can produce an ironic distance. In this case, irony is not merely an ornament but part of the characterization mechanism.

A similar interaction between humour, exaggeration, and situational incongruity can be observed in G'afur G'ulom's Shum bola. The comic effect often arises from a contrast between the child's perspective and the established logic of the adult world. Such contrasts encourage the reader to interpret statements beyond their immediate literal meaning.

The comparison suggests that the pragmatic basis of irony is shared by the two literary traditions, whereas its cultural realization differs. In both Uzbek and English discourse, contextual interpretation is essential. However, the contextual information activated by an ironic utterance may include different social norms, literary conventions, and cultural associations.

Irony and sarcasm should also be distinguished without treating them as completely unrelated phenomena. Irony primarily involves a discrepancy between expressed and intended evaluation, whereas sarcasm usually adds a stronger confrontational or derisive force. Sarcastic utterances often target an individual, behaviour, or proposition and may be designed to ridicule or discredit it [5].

For example, after a serious mistake, the statement "You are certainly a genius" may be interpreted ironically. If its primary communicative purpose is to ridicule the addressee, its pragmatic force becomes distinctly sarcastic. Thus, sarcasm may be understood as a high-intensity evaluative manifestation within the broader field of ironic communication.

The following comparative framework summarizes the main tendencies:

Pragmatic mechanism	Uzbek discourse	English discourse
Literal/intended incongruity	frequent	frequent
Context dependence	very high	very high
Characterization	prominent	prominent
Social criticism	prominent	prominent
Humour	frequently integrated	frequently integrated
Cultural knowledge	strongly involved	strongly involved
Confrontational evaluation	context-dependent	especially strong in sarcasm

The comparison indicates that the universal core of irony is not a particular lexical form but the interpretive relationship between expression, context, and communicative intention. The principal differences concern the cultural resources through which that relationship is made recognizable.

The findings also have implications for translation. A literal translation may preserve the propositional content of an ironic utterance while losing its pragmatic effect. This is especially problematic when irony depends on idioms, culturally specific references, social conventions, or a particular level of politeness.

For this reason, translating irony requires functional rather than merely lexical equivalence. The translator must consider the intended evaluative force, the relation between characters, the cultural assumptions shared by the original audience, and the effect that should be reproduced in the target readership. An Uzbek idiom translated word-for-word into English may cease to be ironic, while an English sarcastic expression may require a culturally appropriate Uzbek formulation to retain its confrontational force.

The comparative evidence therefore supports a broader view of literary irony as a discourse-level phenomenon. Its interpretation depends on linguistic form, narrative organization, social context, and reader participation. This makes irony particularly relevant to comparative linguistics, literary studies, and translation studies.

Corpus, analytical procedure, and interpretive criteria

The comparative corpus was selected to represent different scales and functions of literary irony. The English material consists of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice and Jonathan Swift's A Modest Proposal; the Uzbek material consists of Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar and G'afur G'ulom's Shum bola. The texts were not treated as interchangeable examples. Instead, each was examined for the relation among literal wording, contextual incongruity, communicative target, evaluative force, and cultural presupposition.

The analytical procedure consisted of four steps. First, an utterance or narrative segment with a potential ironic reading was identified. Second, its literal proposition was described without immediately replacing it with an "opposite meaning." Third, contextual evidence was examined: preceding and following discourse, character relations, narrative voice, and relevant cultural expectations. Finally, the inferred evaluative stance was compared with the literal expression. This procedure reduces the risk of treating every humorous or exaggerated expression as irony.

Close comparative readings of representative examples

In Pride and Prejudice, Miss Bingley's "I am all astonishment" occurs within a socially charged exchange about Darcy's interest in Elizabeth Bennet. The expression is not inherently ironic in isolation. Its pragmatic force emerges from the exaggerated response, the conversational setting, and the character's subsequent attempt to turn Darcy's interest into a marriage-oriented joke. The example illustrates interpersonal irony: the reader understands more than the literal proposition because the dialogue is embedded in a recognizable social script [5].

The O'tkan kunlar example is structurally different. Qodiriy's text explicitly describes a letter as containing "kinoya va achchig'lar" and later refers to it as "kinoya va zaharlik maktub" [7]. The important point is not merely that the word kinoya appears. The surrounding accusation and emotional situation turn the expression into a pragmatic act of indirect criticism. Irony here mediates interpersonal conflict: it allows the character to express resentment through a rhetorically controlled form rather than through a purely direct accusation.

The contrast between the two examples reveals a useful cross-linguistic invariant. In both, irony depends

on a gap between surface formulation and the evaluative stance reconstructed from context. The difference lies in the contextual signals. Austen relies strongly on conversational timing, social expectation, and character positioning; Qodiriy's passage draws heavily on emotional vocabulary, address, and culturally familiar patterns of indirect interpersonal evaluation.

Shum bola provides a further layer because humour and social criticism frequently overlap. In translation-oriented analysis, the phrase "basharalaridan 'nur' yog'ilib turadi" has been identified as an ironic expression whose negative evaluation is not preserved by a literal transfer [10]. The positive image of "light" becomes critical because the context makes the praise incompatible with the narrator's actual stance. The example demonstrates why cultural and contextual information must be treated as part of the meaning of irony.

Swift's A Modest Proposal moves the same mechanism from the interpersonal level to the level of sustained satire. The apparent rationality of the proposal conflicts with its ethical implications. The reader is therefore required to maintain the literal rhetorical persona while simultaneously recognizing the moral criticism produced by the whole text [6]. This is a particularly clear case of narrative and structural irony: the "voice" that appears to speak is not identical to the evaluative position the reader is expected to construct.

Comparative findings and Scientific contribution

The findings are relevant to 10.00.06 because they connect comparative literary analysis, contrastive pragmatics, and translation. The analysis demonstrates that the same pragmatic mechanism can be realized through different linguistic and literary resources. It also shows why a comparison based only on lexical equivalents would overlook the principal object of comparison: the relationship between form, context, intention, and evaluative effect.

The proposed model can be summarized as: expression → contextual incongruity → evaluative distance → communicative effect. The addition of evaluative distance is important because it explains why irony can be humorous, critical, affiliative, or hostile without changing its basic inferential structure. Sarcasm becomes more likely when the evaluative distance is deliberately used against a clear target with a ridiculing or confrontational effect.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that irony and sarcasm in Uzbek and English literary discourse are complex pragmatic and stylistic phenomena rather than merely decorative figures of speech. In both traditions, irony is frequently created through a discrepancy between literal expression and intended evaluation, with context providing the principal mechanism for interpretation.

The study shows that the pragmatic foundation of irony is broadly shared across the two languages: readers identify contextual incongruity, infer the communicative intention, and reconstruct the implied evaluation. At the same time, cultural norms, social relationships, literary conventions, and discourse-specific expectations influence how irony is encoded and interpreted.

Sarcasm can be viewed as a more strongly evaluative manifestation of ironic communication, particularly when the utterance is directed at an identifiable target and carries a ridiculing or confrontational intention. This distinction is useful for analysing literary dialogue, characterization, and social criticism.

The findings are also relevant to translation studies. Successful translation of irony requires preservation of pragmatic function and evaluative force rather than mechanical reproduction of lexical form. Further research may examine ironic and sarcastic strategies in contemporary Uzbek and English media discourse, audiovisual subtitles, and machine translation systems.

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