

## THE PRAGMATIC TRANSMISSION OF CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN LITERARY TEXTS: SPEECH ACTS, PRESUPPOSITION AND THE FOUR-COMPONENT MODEL

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### Abstract

This article analyses the pragmatic foundations on which connotative meaning is transmitted in English and Uzbek literary texts. It argues that connotation in literary discourse is shaped pragmatically within the communicative relationship among author, text and reader, and that it often arises not from encoded meaning but from the inference the reader draws on the basis of cooperation, context and shared knowledge. Drawing on the speech-act theory of Austin and Searle, the discourse-marker theory of Schiffrin, the relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson, and the presupposition theories of Karttunen and Stalnaker, the study identifies the pragmatic categories proposition, reference, explicature, inference, relevance and presupposition through which connotation is built.

Applying Teliya's four-component model comprising emotive, evaluative, expressive and stylistic components to passages from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and A Thousand Splendid Suns, and Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, the article demonstrates that these components operate not in isolation but in interaction, with one usually dominant and the others auxiliary. It further shows that delayed perlocutionary effects and hybrid speech acts play an important role in the transmission of literary connotation.

**Keywords:** connotation, pragmatics, speech act, presupposition, relevance, inference, explicature, four-component model, perlocutionary effect.

### Introduction

Connotation in literary discourse is interpreted within the communicative-pragmatic relations among author, text and reader, since the connotative layer is often not limited to denotative content but adds emotional, evaluative and cultural components of meaning. As Rusnak observes, contemporary linguistics increasingly analyses discourse rather than the isolated text; literary discourse operates within a cultural environment and reflects the author's knowledge, attitude, worldview and intention to influence the reader.

Unlike a text, literary discourse is a system that combines the stylistic markers given by the author with the inferences the reader draws on the basis of context. The aim of this article is to identify the pragmatic mechanisms through which connotative meaning is transmitted and to show how a four-component model of connotation accounts for their interaction in literary texts.

### Connotation and Inference

Connotation in literary discourse frequently arises not from encoded meaning but from the reader's inference: the author does not state everything, and the reader concludes by relying on the principles of cooperation, context and shared knowledge. Levinson interprets pragmatics within the theory of meaning, focusing on implicit meaning, inference and the unsaid layer, and stresses that linguistic structure often operates against a presupposed and inferred background.

Malyugina, examining how emphasis is conveyed through discourse markers in eighteenth-century English literary discourse, shows that the impact of a literary text works through emphatic constructions: discourse markers direct the reader's interpretation by organising



emotion, evaluation, stress and logical focus, thereby loading the text with a connotative tone. Schiffrin argues that discourse cannot be explained through grammatical or syntactic connections alone, and that discourse markers serve not only as syntactic connectors but also as pragmatic and interpretive signs that guide how discourse is to be understood and enable the reader to draw additional conclusions.

### **Pragmatic Categories of Literary Discourse**

The pragmatic categories of literary discourse proposition, reference, explicature, inference, relevance and presupposition can be identified on the basis of the work of Halliday and Hasan, Searle, Grice and others. An explicature, as Wilson and Sperber note, is explicitly communicated content that is nevertheless not fully given in language but is reconstructed through the combination of decoding and inference; it begins with semantics and is completed by pragmatics. The difference between explicature and implicature is that the former completes an utterance whose content is open, whereas the latter recovers hidden content through inference. Relevance, in the account of Sperber and Wilson, ensures the successful and meaningful unfolding of communication, its degree measured by the contextual effect achieved: a structure is relevant when it is appropriate to the communicative environment and thereby allows the listener to understand the transmitted information quickly and easily. Presupposition, in the views of Karttunen and Stalnaker, is the condition determining the contexts in which a sentence is appropriately used and is bound up with the common ground of shared knowledge; Karttunen treats it as the condition under which a sentence is correctly and appropriately used, while Stalnaker links it to the common field of knowledge on which interlocutors rely. These theories serve as an important methodological basis for explaining how connotative meaning is formed against a background of shared knowledge.

These categories are not isolated but mutually reinforcing in the construction of connotation. A presupposition supplies the common ground against which an explicature is completed; the completed explicature is then assessed for relevance, and any shortfall between what is said and what the situation makes relevant triggers an inference that yields connotative meaning. Reference and referential cohesion, in turn, sustain this connotative tone across a stretch of discourse, so that the reader carries an evaluative or emotional colouring forward from one sentence to the next. The pragmatic analysis of connotation therefore requires that these categories be applied jointly, as facets of a single inferential process, rather than checked off individually.

### **The Four-Component Model in Analysis**

Teliya's four-component model emotive, evaluative, expressive and stylistic provides an effective methodological basis for the systematic study of connotation. In a passage from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* the emotive component is conveyed by exclamatory and affective expressions that show the narrator's pity and the rapid fading of feeling; the evaluative component appraises the father's wish as the norm while marking external pressure negatively; the expressive component strengthens the credibility of the thought through intensifying devices; and the stylistic component governs the rhythm of the text through lexical repetition, foregrounding the main conclusion and reinforcing the narrator's confessional tone. In a passage from *Gone with the Wind* the emotive component is realised through expressions of physical suffering, the evaluative component through an ethnonym that, in the discourse of the American South, carries the connotation of enemy and invader, the expressive component through triple anaphoric repetition and gradation, and the stylistic component through dialectal choices that mark the southern-rural register of the heroine's speech; here the choice of lick over defeat carries the connotative sense of subduing rather than its literal meaning, and the choice of folks over family marks the register. The four components thus appear together rather than separately, with one usually dominant and the others auxiliary.



### Hybrid Speech Acts and Delayed Perlocution

In a passage from *The Kite Runner*, Baba's assertion that every sin is a variety of theft re-codes the religious notion of sin axiologically; the same utterance simultaneously functions as a directive, guiding the listener towards a particular conduct, and produces an ironic semantic effect, since the speaker unknowingly acts against the very principle he proclaims he has himself robbed Hassan's children of a father. Following Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory, the reader perceives this contradiction fully only at the end of the novel, so that the perlocutionary force is realised in a delayed manner; this is an example of delayed perlocutionary effect.

Hybrid speech acts, in which several illocutionary types combine, are a further mechanism of literary connotation. In Rhett's final words to Scarlett, assertive, expressive and declarative acts merge: the utterance expresses the speaker's state, signals the end of the relationship, and is delivered, as the narration indicates, lightly but softly. The relationship's end is not stated directly but conveyed through the metaphor of broken fragments that cannot be glued back as good as new; the simultaneous violation of the maxims of quantity and quality produces a cumulative implicature that intensifies the emotional effect. Within Teliya's model the emotive component appears in the wish that can no longer be felt, the evaluative component in the negative appraisal of sentimentalities marked as belonging to one who is too old, and the expressive component in the categorical structure of the closing phrases.

### Conclusion

The analyses show that the formation and transmission of connotative meaning in literary discourse is inseparable from pragmatic mechanisms. Teliya's four-component model offers an effective methodological basis for studying connotation systematically, but the analysed passages make clear that the components do not appear separately; they are interrelated, with one usually dominant and the others auxiliary. Speech acts, presupposition, relevance, explicature and discourse markers together constitute the pragmatic apparatus through which connotation is conveyed, and phenomena such as delayed perlocutionary effect and hybrid speech acts demonstrate that connotation is produced in the dynamic interaction of author, text and reader rather than fixed in the lexicon. Connotation thus operates as a communicative-pragmatic mechanism realised through inference, speech acts and shared background knowledge.

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