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Article

Pragmatic and Constructional Connotation in Uzbek Verbs: Periphrastic Forms and Participant Evaluation

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Abstract: Connotative meaning in verb semantics is often associated with lexical choice; however, in many languages it also emerges through grammatical and constructional patterns. This paper investigates pragmatic and constructional connotation in Uzbek verbs, focusing on periphrastic forms formed with auxiliary verbs such as -ib yubor-, -ib qo‘y-, and -ib tashla-. Using qualitative analysis of contextual examples drawn from literary texts and commonly accepted usage, the study demonstrates how these constructions encode evaluative and pragmatic nuances, including suddenness, inadvertence, reproach, and decisiveness. The results show that Uzbek periphrastic verb constructions function as systematic carriers of connotative meaning and play a crucial role in shaping speaker stance and participant evaluation. The paper argues that constructional connotation should be treated as an integral component of Uzbek verb semantics and highlights its relevance for pragmatic analysis, discourse interpretation, and applied linguistic research.

Keywords: Uzbek Verbs, Pragmatic Connotation, Periphrastic Constructions, Evaluation, Stance, Discourse Meaning

1. Introduction

In traditional lexical semantics, connotation is commonly described as an additional layer of meaning attached to individual words. While this view accounts for many evaluative and emotive distinctions, it underestimates the role of grammatical structure in meaning construction. In actual language use, speakers frequently rely on grammatical patterns to express attitudes that are not explicitly encoded in lexical items. Uzbek provides a particularly illustrative case in this respect, as its verb system makes extensive use of periphrastic constructions involving auxiliary verbs[1].

Periphrastic verb forms in Uzbek are often treated as aspectual or stylistic variants. However, closer examination reveals that these constructions regularly introduce pragmatic evaluations that affect interpretation. For instance, the difference between aytdi (“said”) and aytib yubordi (“blurted out”) cannot be explained solely in terms of tense or aspect. The latter suggests suddenness, lack of control, or unintended disclosure, thereby reshaping how the action and the speaker are evaluated[2].

The aim of this paper is to examine how Uzbek periphrastic verb constructions function as carriers of connotative meaning. The study adopts a pragmatic perspective and argues that constructional choices systematically encode speaker stance and participant evaluation. By analysing frequently used auxiliary-based constructions, the paper demonstrates that connotation in Uzbek verb semantics is not limited to the lexeme but emerges at the interface of grammar and pragmatics[3].

Theoretical Background

The pragmatic dimension of meaning has long been recognised as central to linguistic interpretation. Grice's theory of implicature shows that speakers routinely convey meanings that go beyond what is explicitly stated, relying on shared assumptions and inferential processes. In this framework, grammatical constructions may serve as triggers for pragmatic inference rather than as mere formal devices[4].

Research on evaluation and stance further supports this view. Linguistic choices, including verbal constructions, function as resources for expressing judgement, affect, and degrees of speaker involvement. While much of this research has focused on lexical evaluation, recent approaches emphasise that grammatical patterns also encode evaluative meaning[5].

Another relevant perspective is provided by studies on connotation frames in verb semantics. These studies demonstrate that verbs can implicitly portray participants as responsible, careless, powerful, or passive, even without explicit evaluative markers [6]. In Uzbek, periphrastic constructions intensify this effect by modifying how actions are interpreted in terms of intentionality, control, and outcome[7].

Taken together, these theoretical approaches suggest that connotative meaning may be systematically embedded in constructional patterns. This paper builds on these insights by examining Uzbek periphrastic verb constructions as pragmatic devices that shape evaluation and stance[8].

2. Materials and Methods

The study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology. The data consist of Uzbek verb constructions formed with auxiliary verbs such as yubor-, qo'y-, and tashla- following a main verb in converb form (-ib). These constructions were selected because of their high frequency and their noticeable pragmatic impact in both literary and everyday language[9].

Examples were drawn from Uzbek literary prose and from commonly recognised usage patterns reflected in descriptive sources and native speaker intuition. Literary texts were used to illustrate how authors exploit periphrastic constructions to convey emotional intensity, character attitude, and narrative stance[10].

Each construction was analysed with respect to:

the pragmatic meaning it introduces (e.g. suddenness, inadvertence);

its evaluative effect;

implications for participant roles, especially agent responsibility and control.

The goal of the analysis is not quantitative generalisation but the identification of recurrent semantic–pragmatic patterns[11].

3. Results

The Construction -ib yubor- and Suddenness

The auxiliary yubor- is one of the most productive means of expressing sudden or unplanned action in Uzbek. In constructions such as Men sirni aytib yubordim ("I blurted out the secret"), the action is presented as occurring unexpectedly and often against the speaker's intention.

This construction introduces a pragmatic inference of reduced control. As a result, the agent is frequently evaluated as careless or momentarily overwhelmed rather than deliberately acting. The connotative meaning does not lie in the verb aytmoq itself but emerges from the construction as a whole. Thus, -ib yubor- functions as a marker of inadvertence and spontaneous action[12].

The Construction -ib qo'y- and Mild Reproach

The auxiliary qo'y- typically conveys completion, but it also carries an implicit evaluative nuance. In utterances such as U shunday deb qo'ydi ("He went and said that"), the construction often implies that the action was unnecessary or inappropriate.

Unlike -ib yubor-, which foregrounds suddenness, -ib qo‘y- frequently signals mild reproach or speaker disapproval. This evaluation is rarely explicit; instead, it is inferred from the constructional choice. As a result, the agent is subtly positioned as having acted thoughtlessly or without sufficient consideration[13].

The Construction -ib tashla- and Decisiveness

The auxiliary tashla- introduces a sense of categorical or irreversible action. In expressions such as Hujjatni o‘chirib tashladi (“He deleted the document completely”), the construction emphasises finality and thoroughness.

This construction often portrays the agent as decisive and purposeful. At the same time, depending on context, it may also imply severity or lack of empathy. Thus, -ib tashla- encodes a strong evaluative stance that shapes how the action and its consequences are interpreted[14].

4. Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that Uzbek periphrastic verb constructions systematically encode pragmatic connotation. These constructions guide interpretation by shaping expectations about intentionality, control, and evaluation. Rather than functioning as optional stylistic variants, they represent stable mechanisms for expressing stance.

From a pragmatic perspective, such constructions operate as triggers of inference in the Gricean sense [15]. Speakers rely on shared knowledge of constructional meaning to interpret actions beyond their denotative content. This finding supports construction-based approaches to meaning and highlights the importance of grammatical form in connotative analysis.

The results also complement studies on evaluative meaning and connotation frames by showing that participant portrayal in Uzbek is not limited to lexical choice but is reinforced through grammatical structure . Consequently, constructional connotation should be considered a core component of Uzbek verb semantics.

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that connotative meaning in Uzbek verbs extends beyond lexical choice to include constructional patterns. Periphrastic constructions with auxiliaries such as -ib yubor-, -ib qo‘y-, and -ib tashla- function as systematic carriers of pragmatic and evaluative meaning. By shaping perceptions of suddenness, responsibility, and decisiveness, these constructions play a crucial role in discourse interpretation. The findings underscore the need to incorporate constructional connotation into analyses of Uzbek verb semantics and open new avenues for pragmatic and applied linguistic research.

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