



Article

# Methods of Using Words in Figurative Meaning in The Uzbek Language

Mubinakhon Mukhtorjon qizi Mehmonova

1. 1st-year student Kokand State University, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Department of Uzbek Language and Literature

\* Correspondence:

**Abstract:** This article provides a scientific analysis of the methods of using words in figurative meaning in the Uzbek language. It examines the linguistic features of devices that create figurative meaning, such as semantic extension, metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche. It also discusses the functional significance of figurative meanings in literary speech and everyday communication, as well as their role in enhancing speech expressiveness. The results of the study help to reveal the figurative potential of the language and provide important theoretical conclusions for the fields of stylistics and semantics.

**Keywords:** semantic shift, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, functional transfer methods

## 1. Introduction

The figurative use of words is considered one of the important lexical-semantic phenomena of language. In the Uzbek language, this phenomenon plays a significant role in increasing the expressiveness, imagery, and emotional impact of speech. Through figurative meaning, words acquire new and additional meanings beyond their primary sense, making speech more vivid and effective. The study of methods of figurative usage is also relevant for semasiology and stylistics, which are important branches of linguistics.[1][2][3]

In the Uzbek language, the main methods of creating figurative meaning, such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and functional transfer, are widely used. Studying this topic helps to understand more deeply the language's ability to create imagery and reveals the expressive power of words in both literary and everyday speech. The phenomenon of figurative meaning in Uzbek is actively used not only in fiction but also in daily communication. This contributes to the natural development and enrichment of the language. Figurative meanings expand the possibilities of expressing ideas briefly, clearly, and vividly.

Furthermore, the formation of figurative meaning reflects the way language users think. In other words, people create new meanings by comparing or associating one concept with another. This process demonstrates not only the communicative but also the cognitive function of language.[4][5]

## 2. Materials and Methods

Although words may be neutral in their direct meaning, they acquire stylistic meaning when used in a figurative sense within a context. For example, the beautiful feature of a flower is transferred to a person (flower-like face), a place (flower garden), or an action (skillful hands), and as a result, the word flower gains an additional stylistic meaning. The transfer of a word from its literal meaning and its acquisition of stylistic content are mostly found in literary style, sometimes in journalistic style, and occasionally in colloquial speech.[6]

**Citation:** Mehmonova, M. M. Q. Methods of Using Words in Figurative Meaning in The Uzbek Language. Pioneer: Journal of Advanced Research and Scientific Progress 2026, 5(2), 167-172

Received: 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026

Revised: 21<sup>th</sup> Mar 2026

Accepted: 08<sup>th</sup> Apr 2026

Published: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026



**Copyright:** © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Names of objects, events, qualities, and actions existing in reality may also be used to denote other objects, events, qualities, or actions based on a certain similarity or connection. In such cases, one name serves to represent several different concepts. For instance, the word nose expresses the meaning “the breathing organ protruding from the human face,” but it can also mean “a part of land stretching out toward water.” The external similarity between the human nose and a cape of land extending into the sea or ocean forms the basis for using the same word in both meanings.[7]

The use of words in a figurative sense is called semantic transfer. Depending on the basis of the transfer, it is classified into types such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and functional transfer. The most common type of semantic transfer in speech is metaphor.[8]

Metaphor (from the Greek *metaphora* – “transfer”) is the transfer of a feature or action of one object to another based on similarity. For example, in the phrase the mouth of the oven, the word mouth is formed on the basis of its external similarity to the mouth of a human or animal. Similarities between objects and phenomena may occur on different grounds:

a) The names of human body parts are transferred to other objects. For example: the head of the street, the face of the Earth, the page of a book, the mouth of a bottle, the nose of a teapot, the ear of a dutar.

b) The names of parts of human clothing are transferred to other objects. For example: the foot of a mountain, the bank (collar) of a river, the button of a door.

c) The names of birds’ and animals’ body parts are transferred to other things. For example: Our football players attacked from the left wing; the tail of the kite waved beautifully in the sky.

Verbs expressing actions or states and adjectives expressing qualities may also undergo semantic transfer based on similarity through metaphor. For example: to connect one word to another, the sky shed tears, to wither away, sweet dream, cold news.[9][10]

Sweet: sweet apple (literal meaning) – sweet behavior (metaphorical meaning)

Beautiful: beautiful dress (literal) – beautiful behavior (metaphorical)

To dry up: The water dried up (literal) – The trail disappeared (metaphorical)

To melt: The ice melted (literal) – The mother’s heart melted (metaphorical)

When semantic transfer occurs in adjectives, one type of meaning is used to express another type. For example, in the sentence “Look how sweet this child is!”, the word sweet normally refers to taste, but here it expresses a positive personal quality. Likewise, in the sentence “His behavior is narrow”, the word narrow, which usually expresses size, is used metaphorically to describe character or attitude.[11]

Expressions similar to metaphors are similes, through which people and objects are compared with one another: Like a lost dog, Furqat, I do not know where to go. Ulugbek is like the sun.

The names given to melon varieties, flowers, birds, and insects are also often based on metaphor: Melon varieties: *obinovvot* (similar in taste) *kampirchopon* (similar in appearance) *umriboqiy* (similar in long preservation) *bo’rikalla* (similar in weight)

Flowers: *itog’iz* (“dog’s mouth,” flower resembles a dog’s mouth) *karnaygul* (“trumpet flower,” resembles a trumpet) *gultojixo’roz* (“rooster’s crown flower,” resembles a rooster’s comb)

Animals and insects: *tillaqo’ng’iz toshbaqa* (turtle) *qizilishton*

There are also personal names in Uzbek formed through metaphor, such as: *Gulanor*, *Gulsevar*, *Gulchehra*, *Gulobod*, *Gulshoda*, *Asalxon*, *Oyjamol*, *Otanazar*, *Ozoda*. [12]

Examples of Metaphors

Golden autumn – because of the similarity of yellow color.

Open face – sincerity compared to brightness/light.

Stone heart – cruelty compared to the hardness of stone.

Sweet words – pleasant speech compared to sweetness of taste.

Metonymy (from Greek *metonymia* – “renaming”) is the transfer of a name from one object or phenomenon to another based on their spatial or temporal connection.

In everyday life, when two things are constantly associated with each other, a relationship forms between them. As a result, mentioning the name of one makes the other understood.

For example, in the sentence "I picked up Navoi", there is a connection between the poet and his works, so it is understood not that Navoi himself was picked up, but his book or works.

In the sentence "We ate pilaf in the samovar", the name transfer occurs because of the relationship between the place where tea is drunk and the object in which tea is boiled.

In metonymy, one of the two objects is always mentioned while the other is implied. Therefore, even if the second object's name is omitted, it is understood through the first object.

Examples: The hall stood up → the people gathered in the hall stood up. The audience laughed → the people sitting in the audience laughed. I turned 19 → I turned 19 years old. I live in Chilonzor → I live in Chilonzor district. I'll get off at "Paxtakor" → I

Compare the following word combinations: "Oltin Vodiy" train, Afrosiyob variety of apple, "Paxtakor" football team, Amarfuzin ointment, Hojimatov tincture, Samirsoqov's half-field, X-ray machine, "Chorsu" hotel, Ford automobile, "Toshkent" café, Damas vehicle, Nestlé milk, Coca-Cola drink, Dinay juice, "Imkon-show" program.

If the main word in these combinations is omitted, a semantic shift based on metonymy occurs.

Examples: I have never abandoned Lermontov. (Through the name Lermontov, his literary works are meant.) Alisher Navoi conquered the whole world with his pen. (Through the word pen, his literary creativity and works are meant.) "Bunyodkor" hosted "So'g'diyona" and achieved victory on its home field. (Here, football teams are meant.)

Synecdoche. Synecdoche (from Greek *synecdoche* – "understanding together") is a figure of speech in which the name of a person or object is represented through one of its parts or members; that is, a part is used to express the whole, or the whole is used to express a part.

- Do they have children?
- They long even for a fingernail.

In the dialogue above, the listener could simply have answered "No." However, the expression "longing for even a fingernail" was preferred. By using this phrase, the speaker not only states that the person has no child, but also strongly emphasizes their deep longing and desire to have one.[13]

Why is the word fingernail used instead of child or baby?

A fingernail is a very small part of a child's body. By saying that they long even for that tiny part, the speaker intensifies and exaggerates the longing for a child itself. In this case, the whole object (the child) is represented through one of its parts (the fingernail). This type of semantic transfer is called synecdoche. In synecdoche, when a part represents the whole, usually the most important or characteristic part of the whole is mentioned.

Examples: He did not taste salt until evening. Here, salt stands for food. Since salt is considered one of the essential parts of food, the part represents the whole. What will the hearing ear say? Here, ear, which is one part of a human being, represents the whole person.

Examples of Synecdoche: Five fingers are not equal. Here, hand refers to its part – the fingers. Ten hands, ten skills. Again, hand stands for fingers or handiwork/ability. While peeling an apple, he cut his hand. Here, hand actually refers to a finger, which is a part of the hand.

Functional Transfer and Its Stylistics

The streets are brightly lit by lamps.

He lowered the wick of the lamp.

If you pay attention to the meaning of the word lamp (*chiroq*) used in the two sentences above, you will notice that it refers to two different objects that perform the same function. In the first sentence, it means a pear-shaped or tube-shaped electric lighting device (a bulb/lamp). In the second sentence, it refers to a kerosene lamp consisting of a base, wick, and glass chimney used for lighting.[14]

These devices do not resemble each other in shape, nor are they directly connected in time or space, but both perform the same function – providing light. Because of this functional similarity, the name originally used for an open oil lamp with a wick later began to refer to glass-covered lamps and eventually to electric light bulbs as well. As a result, the word lamp came to be used for various different lighting devices.

Let us take another example: the word ink (*siyoh*).

In Persian/Tajik, *siyoh* originally meant black, and in ancient times it referred specifically to black liquid used for writing. Later, however, the term began to be used for writing liquids of different colors as well: red ink, blue ink, black ink.

The use of the name of one object or phenomenon to express another based on functional similarity is called functional semantic transfer (or transfer based on similarity of function).

Examples: A lamp shone in our street.

→ based on the common lighting function shared by all lamps.

He opened the car door and helped his friend out.

→ based on the common entrance/exit function of doors.

The leg of the table has become crooked.

→ based on the supporting function shared by a human leg and a table leg.

The broken eye of the window was covered with plastic film.

→ based on the light-transmitting function shared by the human eye and a window pane.

The wing of the airplane is made of strong metal.

→ based on the balancing and flying function shared by a bird's wing and an airplane wing.

Even walls have ears, my dear.

→ based on the sound-transmitting or hearing function shared by human ears and "the ears of walls."

Understanding words that emerged through functional transfer and realizing what kinds of objects they originally referred to helps us appreciate how rich and expressive our language is.

### 3. Results and Discussion

When discussing Alisher Navoiy and Uzbek classical literature, metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but an entire philosophical system. In classical poetry, especially in Navoiy's works, metaphor is usually studied under the term *istoria*. The discussions and conclusions regarding metaphors in Navoiy's творчество can be observed in the following aspects:

#### 1. "Hidden" and "Present" Metaphors

In classical literature, particularly in Navoiy's ghazals, metaphor functions on two levels:

Literal (external) meaning: the sufferings of the lover and the beauty of the beloved.

Inner (spiritual) meaning: humanity's love for God in the Sufi tradition.

For example, the metaphors of "wine" or "alcohol" do not refer to ordinary drinks; rather, they symbolize divine love and mystical ecstasy.

For Navoiy, metaphor serves as a means of concealing truth while simultaneously presenting it in a more beautiful and refined way. His *Khamsa* and the collection *Xazoyin ul-Maoniy* together form a vast metaphorical universe. Without metaphor, the complex concepts of Sufism could hardly have been expressed with such elegance and subtlety.[15]

The famous Uzbek comedian Hojiboy Tojiboyev also humorously demonstrated how figurative expressions are used in everyday speech. For example: "Why didn't you appear at the pilaf gathering?" He replies: "Am I rice that I should appear in pilaf?"

In reality, *osh* ("pilaf") refers metonymically to a feast or gathering where pilaf is served; therefore, the intended meaning is "Why didn't you come to the feast?" Another example: "Won't you sit for soup?" He replies: "How can I sit on hot soup?" Actually, the phrase means "Won't you sit down to drink soup?" Many people have laughed at such anecdotes from Tojiboyev's program "O'zbekning gapi qiziq" ("Uzbek Speech is Funny").

The humor arises because he intentionally interprets figurative expressions according to their direct meanings. His mastery lies in understanding both literal and figurative meanings and creating comedy from this contrast.

**Metonymy.** Metonymy is the logical map of language. Through it, we perceive the world as a chain of interconnected relations. While metaphor is based on similarity and synecdoche on quantity or part-whole relations, metonymy relies on association and contiguity.

**Conclusions on Synecdoche**

Linguistic and literary analyses of synecdoche lead to the following conclusions:

**Synecdoche as a subtype of metonymy:** Many literary scholars consider synecdoche a special form of metonymy because both are based on logical relationships between objects.

**Everyday and literary synecdoche:** In daily speech, expressions such as “Come to the pilaf” meaning “Come to the feast” have become so natural that speakers no longer notice their figurative nature. In literature, however, synecdoche becomes an important marker of an author’s individual style.

**Result:** Synecdoche enriches the process of naming in language and broadens expressive possibilities. Through it, speech becomes more vivid, logically powerful, and concise. Synecdoche is therefore a remarkable example of the art of expressing “much meaning with few words.” Through the relationship between part and whole, it creates a unique way of understanding reality.

**Conclusions on Coordination and Parallel Structures**

The study of coordinated sentence elements leads to several important observations:

**Economy of speech:** Several short sentences such as “He ate an apple. He ate a pomegranate. He ate cherries.” can be combined into one concise sentence: “He ate apples, pomegranates, and cherries.”

**Logical organization:** Coordination helps classify and arrange objects and phenomena into systematic groups. **Stylistic expressiveness:** In literary texts, coordinated structures are used to create detailed and intensified descriptions. **Importance of punctuation:** Commas between coordinated elements and the use of colons or dashes with generalizing words are important indicators of written language culture. Thus, coordination serves the linguistic principle of “power in brevity.” It allows thoughts to be expressed not in a scattered but in a coherent and unified manner.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the figurative use of words in the Uzbek language represents an important form of semantic expansion. This phenomenon arises from the secondary nominative function of linguistic units and provides imagery, expressiveness, and stylistic diversity in speech. Figurative meaning is mainly formed through semantic mechanisms such as metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche, whose relationships are based on similarity, contiguity, or general association. These methods broaden the expressive possibilities of language and enhance the clarity and emotional impact of speech. Therefore, the systematic study of figurative meanings has significant theoretical and practical importance in linguistics.

Furthermore, the emergence and development of figurative meanings are closely connected with historical and linguistic processes. During the evolution of language, such meanings may become stabilized and, in some cases, even turn into primary (literal) meanings. This demonstrates the internal evolution of the lexical system.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] A. Nurmonov, *Theory of Linguistics*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: O‘zbekiston, 2001.  
 [2] G‘. Abdurahmonov and A. Rustamov, *Uzbek Grammar*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Fan, 1982.

- 
- [3] N. Erkaboyeva, Collection of Lectures on the Uzbek Language. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Yosh Kuch Publishing House, 2021.
- [4] N. Mahmudov and A. Nurmonov, Theoretical Grammar of the Uzbek Language. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Fan, 1995.
- [5] Sh. Rahmatullayev, Explanatory Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: O'qituvchi, 2006.
- [6] N. Mahmudov, Modern Uzbek Literary Language. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, 2007.
- [7] H. Ne'matov and R. Rasulova, Foundations of Systemic Lexicology of the Uzbek Language. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: O'qituvchi Publishing House, 1995.
- [8] A. Hojiyev, Explanatory Dictionary of Linguistic Terms. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: National Encyclopedia, 2002.
- [9] I. Mirzayev, Speech Etiquette and Communicative Culture. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Innovatsiya-Ziyo, 2018.
- [10] P. W. Singer and A. Friedman, Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2020.
- [11] J. Lever-Duffy and J. McDonald, Teaching and Learning with Technology, 6th ed. London, U.K.: Pearson, 2019.
- [12] T. J. Newby, D. A. Stepich, J. D. Lehman, and J. D. Russell, Educational Technology for Teaching and Learning, 5th ed. London, U.K.: Pearson, 2018.
- [13] UNESCO, ICT Competency Framework for Teachers. Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing, 2018.
- [14] International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), ISTE Standards for Educators: A Guide for Teachers and Other Professionals. Washington, DC, USA: ISTE, 2019.
- [15] S. Krishnan and T. Norman, Cybersecurity Education for Awareness and Compliance. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2021.