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Abstract. This article examines the lexical-semantic and contextual representation of fear in 20th-century Uzbek prose, with particular attention to the linguistic means through which fear as a psychological and socio-cultural phenomenon is constructed in literary discourse. The study considers fear not only as an emotional state or literary motif but also as a semantic and contextual phenomenon manifested through lexical units, emotional expressions, descriptions of psychological states, and context-dependent meanings. Particular attention is paid to the semantic differentiation of lexical items associated with fear, anxiety, apprehension, panic, and psychological tension, as well as to their functions in representing the characters' inner experiences. The analysis demonstrates that fear in Uzbek prose may be expressed both directly through emotion-related vocabulary and indirectly through contextual descriptions of physical reactions, inner speech, silence, hesitation, and psychological conflict. The contextual interpretation of fear also reveals its connection with personal experience, social pressure, historical memory, moral responsibility, and existential concerns. Thus, the linguistic representation of fear contributes not only to the psychological characterization of literary protagonists but also to the development of narrative tension and the interpretation of broader social and philosophical meanings in Uzbek prose.

Keywords: fear, fear motif, lexical semantics, contextual meaning, emotional vocabulary, semantic field, psychological state, inner speech, Uzbek prose, literary discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Fear is one of the fundamental emotional experiences represented in literary discourse. As a complex psychological phenomenon, it may emerge in response to external danger, uncertainty, social pressure, personal loss, moral conflict, or an anticipated threat. In literary texts, however, fear is rarely limited to the direct naming of an emotional state. It can be represented through a broad range of lexical, semantic, contextual, and stylistic means that reveal the psychological condition of a character and contribute to the development of the narrative. Therefore, the linguistic study of fear provides an opportunity

to examine not only the vocabulary of emotions but also the ways in which emotional experience is constructed and interpreted within a particular literary and cultural context.

In Uzbek prose, the representation of the individual's inner world became increasingly significant throughout the twentieth century. Alongside social and philosophical themes, writers paid considerable attention to the psychological experiences of literary characters, including anxiety, apprehension, uncertainty, suffering, and fear. These emotional states frequently become interconnected with the characters' relationships with society, historical circumstances, personal destiny, moral responsibility, and their own inner selves. Consequently, fear can function simultaneously as a psychological experience, a literary motif, and a means of revealing the character's internal conflict.

From a linguistic perspective, the representation of fear requires attention to the semantic relationships among words denoting different degrees and forms of emotional experience. Uzbek literary discourse contains a range of lexical units associated with fear and related psychological states, including *qo'rquv* (fear), *hadik* (apprehension), *xavotir* (anxiety), *vahm* (dread), *vahima* (panic), and other expressions describing emotional and physiological reactions. These units are not necessarily synonymous in every context. Their meanings and expressive functions may vary depending on the lexical environment, the situation represented, the speaker's psychological state, and the broader narrative context. The analysis of such contextual variation makes it possible to identify semantic distinctions that may not be evident when individual words are considered in isolation.

The concept of fear is also closely connected with the representation of inner speech and psychological experience. A character's fear may be explicitly verbalized through statements describing an emotional state, or it may be conveyed indirectly through hesitation, repetition, fragmented speech, silence, changes in perception, descriptions of bodily reactions, or references to disturbing memories and anticipated events. Such forms of representation demonstrate that the meaning of fear in literary discourse is constructed through interaction between lexical choice and context. In this respect, contextual analysis is essential for determining the precise emotional and semantic value of fear-related expressions.

The study of fear in literary discourse is particularly relevant to the analysis of twentieth-century Uzbek prose because the representation of psychological experience is frequently connected with broader social, historical, and philosophical questions. In some literary contexts, fear is associated with personal relationships and individual uncertainty; in others, it reflects social pressure, historical memory, moral responsibility, or the consequences of political and cultural circumstances. Thus, the linguistic representation of fear can provide insight into both the individual psychological world of a literary character and the wider meanings constructed by the narrative.

Previous literary approaches to fear have often focused on its function as a motif, its role in character development, or its contribution to psychological and philosophical interpretation. The present study approaches the phenomenon primarily from a linguistic

perspective by focusing on the lexical-semantic and contextual dimensions of its representation in twentieth-century Uzbek prose. Such an approach makes it possible to move from the general identification of fear as a literary motif toward a systematic examination of the linguistic forms through which this emotional experience is constructed.

The purpose of this study is therefore to identify and analyze the lexical-semantic and contextual means used to represent fear in twentieth-century Uzbek prose. The study pays particular attention to the semantic relationships among fear-related lexical units, their contextual meanings, their representation of different psychological states, and their role in revealing the inner world of literary characters. By combining lexical-semantic and contextual analysis, the research seeks to demonstrate how fear functions as a linguistically constructed emotional phenomenon within Uzbek literary discourse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of fear in literary discourse has developed at the intersection of literary studies, psychology, and linguistics. In literary criticism, fear is generally considered not merely an emotional reaction to danger but a phenomenon that may contribute to the psychological characterization of a protagonist, intensification of narrative conflict, and development of philosophical and social meanings. From this perspective, the representation of fear is closely related to the depiction of the inner world of literary characters and the ways in which their psychological experiences are incorporated into the narrative structure.

Psychological approaches to fear emphasize the relationship between external circumstances and internal experience. The theoretical perspective associated with Sigmund Freud is particularly relevant to literary representations of fear because it draws attention to the role of memory, repressed experience, and the return of psychologically familiar but disturbing elements. The concept of the uncanny, discussed by Freud, demonstrates that experiences of fear may emerge not only from objectively dangerous situations but also from something psychologically familiar that becomes strange or unsettling. This perspective is useful for interpreting literary characters whose fears originate in memories, unresolved experiences, or internal conflicts rather than in immediate physical danger.

In literary studies, the psychological representation of a character is frequently connected with such narrative techniques as inner speech, interior monologue, dialogue, dream sequences, memory, and descriptions of emotional or physiological reactions. These forms enable authors to represent experiences that cannot always be expressed through direct statements. Consequently, fear may remain implicit in the narrative and become recognizable through contextual signs such as hesitation, fragmented speech, repetition, silence, changes in perception, or descriptions of bodily reactions. Such representations demonstrate the importance of examining fear beyond individual lexical items.

The representation of fear has also been considered in relation to the social and historical dimensions of literary experience. The material examined in the present study indicates that fear in Uzbek prose can be associated with social pressure, historical memory, political circumstances, personal responsibility, and moral conflict. In this context, fear may

move from an individual psychological experience toward a broader collective or social phenomenon. Literary characters may experience fear not only because of immediate personal circumstances but also because of the consequences of historical events and the expectations imposed by society.

Research on contemporary Uzbek prose likewise demonstrates the importance of psychological representation in the works of writers such as Tog'ay Murod, Murod Muhammad Do'st, Nazar Eshonqul, Ulug'bek Hamdam, Isajon Sulton, and Javlon Jovliyev. The material provided for this study particularly highlights Isajon Sulton's *Ozod* and Javlon Jovliyev's *Qo'rqma*, where fear is connected with the protagonists' inner experiences, historical memory, personal responsibility, and spiritual development. In *Qo'rqma*, for example, fear is represented through the protagonist's memories, inner speech, psychological tension, and reflections on historical events. In *Ozod*, by contrast, fear is associated more strongly with existential questions, spiritual development, self-awareness, and the possibility of living without understanding the meaning of human existence. These differences demonstrate that the semantic content of fear is dependent on the narrative and psychological context in which it occurs.

From a linguistic perspective, however, the representation of fear requires a more systematic examination of the lexical units through which this emotion is verbalized. Words associated with fear may form a semantic field that includes direct designations of fear as well as related emotional states such as apprehension, anxiety, dread, panic, and psychological tension. Although these units may overlap semantically, their contextual functions and degrees of emotional intensity may differ. Therefore, identifying semantic relationships among such lexical items is necessary for understanding how literary texts construct different manifestations of fear.

Contextual interpretation is particularly important because the meaning of an emotion-related lexical unit cannot always be determined solely from its dictionary definition. The same lexical item may acquire different shades of meaning depending on the character, situation, surrounding lexical elements, narrative perspective, and communicative context. Fear can also be represented without an explicit fear-related word, through descriptions of physical reactions, behavior, inner speech, or changes in the character's perception. This makes contextual analysis an essential component of the linguistic study of emotional vocabulary in literary discourse.

Despite the relevance of psychological, literary, and social approaches to fear, the lexical-semantic and contextual dimensions of fear in twentieth-century Uzbek prose require further systematic examination. In particular, there is a need to distinguish between the lexical naming of fear and its indirect contextual representation, as well as to establish how different fear-related expressions participate in the construction of a character's psychological state. The present study addresses this issue by combining lexical-semantic analysis with contextual interpretation and by considering fear as both an emotional phenomenon and a linguistically constructed element of literary discourse.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

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The material of the study consists of linguistic and literary examples representing fear and related psychological states in twentieth-century Uzbek prose. Particular attention is given to contexts in which fear is expressed through direct emotion-related lexical units, semantically related vocabulary, descriptions of psychological states, and contextual or figurative expressions. The analysis also considers examples in which fear is represented indirectly through the characters' inner speech, behavioral reactions, physical states, hesitation, silence, and psychological conflict.

The study draws on literary contexts from Uzbek prose in which the representation of fear contributes to the characterization of protagonists and the development of psychological, social, historical, or philosophical meanings. The analysis particularly considers the representation of fear in relation to the individual's inner world and the circumstances surrounding the character. Where relevant to the analysis, examples from Isajon Sulton's *Ozod* and Javlon Jovliyev's *Qo'rqma*, discussed in the source material, are examined as literary contexts in which fear acquires different semantic and psychological meanings.

The selection of examples is based on their relevance to the research objective. Priority is given to contexts that demonstrate either the explicit lexical expression of fear or its implicit representation through contextual and stylistic means. This approach allows the study to distinguish between the lexical naming of fear and the representation of fear as a broader psychological experience.

The research employs a combination of descriptive, lexical-semantic, contextual, componential, and interpretive methods.

The descriptive method is used to identify and systematize the lexical and contextual forms through which fear is represented in Uzbek prose. It provides a basis for organizing the selected examples according to their linguistic characteristics.

The lexical-semantic method is applied to examine the meanings and semantic relationships of words associated with fear and related emotional states. Particular attention is paid to the differentiation of such concepts as fear, apprehension, anxiety, dread, panic, and psychological tension. The analysis seeks to determine the semantic similarities and differences between these units rather than treating them as complete synonyms.

The contextual method is used to establish how the meaning of fear-related expressions changes according to the literary situation in which they occur. This method is particularly important for identifying contextual meanings that cannot be fully explained through the lexical meaning of an individual word. The surrounding narrative, the character's psychological condition, the relationship between characters, and the development of events are taken into consideration when interpreting each example.

The componential method is employed to identify distinctive semantic features within the vocabulary associated with fear. Such features may include emotional intensity, anticipation of danger, uncertainty, psychological tension, loss, threat, and internal conflict. This makes it possible to differentiate between closely related lexical units and to establish their specific semantic functions in literary contexts.

The interpretive method is used to explain the relationship between linguistic representation and the psychological or social meaning constructed by the literary text. Through this method, the study considers how fear contributes to the representation of a protagonist's inner world, moral choices, personal experiences, historical memory, and relationship with society.

The analysis also distinguishes between direct and indirect representation of fear. Direct representation involves lexical units that explicitly name fear or a closely related emotional state. Indirect representation includes descriptions of physiological reactions, behavioral changes, inner speech, silence, hesitation, fragmented expression, symbolic images, and other contextual indicators of fear.

By combining these methods, the study examines fear at both the lexical-semantic level, where specific words and expressions are analyzed, and the contextual level, where their meanings and functions are determined within the broader structure of the literary text. This methodological combination makes it possible to approach fear not only as a literary motif but also as a linguistically represented psychological phenomenon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that fear in Uzbek prose is represented through a combination of direct lexical nomination and indirect contextual representation. The examined literary contexts show that fear cannot be reduced to a single emotional state. Depending on the situation, it may express apprehension, anxiety, dread, panic, psychological tension, moral concern, or an existential sense of uncertainty. Consequently, the semantic interpretation of fear depends not only on the lexical item used but also on the psychological condition of the character and the broader narrative context.

Lexical-Semantic Representation of Fear

At the lexical-semantic level, fear is represented through a group of semantically related units referring to different manifestations and degrees of emotional experience. The lexical field associated with fear includes direct expressions of fear as well as words denoting apprehension, anxiety, dread, panic, and related psychological states. These units demonstrate both semantic proximity and functional differentiation.

The analysis suggests that fear-related vocabulary can be conditionally divided into several semantic groups. The first group consists of units that directly designate fear as an emotional state. The second includes expressions associated with anticipation or apprehension, in which the threatening event has not necessarily occurred but is psychologically expected. The third group represents intensified emotional states such as panic, dread, or terror. The fourth group includes contextual expressions describing the physical and behavioral manifestations of fear.

This differentiation is important because closely related emotional expressions do not always perform the same function in literary discourse. For example, apprehension may indicate an anticipated danger, whereas panic suggests a more intense and immediate psychological reaction. Thus, the lexical choice enables the writer to represent different degrees and forms of emotional tension.

Fear may also be expressed without an explicit lexical equivalent of fear. Descriptions of trembling, changes in facial expression, hesitation, silence, fragmented speech, or disturbed perception can function as contextual indicators of the same emotional state. Therefore, the semantic field of fear extends beyond words that directly name the emotion.

Contextual Representation of Fear

Contextual analysis reveals that the meaning of fear changes according to the psychological and narrative circumstances of the character. In Javlon Jovliyev's *Qo'rqma*, for example, fear is closely connected with memory, historical experience, personal responsibility, and the protagonist's perception of the present and future. The protagonist's fear is repeatedly associated with traumatic memories and is articulated through inner speech. Consequently, fear becomes a mechanism through which the character confronts both personal and historical experience.

One of the important characteristics of this representation is the interaction between fear and inner discourse. The protagonist's psychological state is conveyed through memories, imagined conversations, reflections, and emotionally intensified speech. The boundaries between present experience, memory, and imagined situations become less distinct. In this context, fear functions not simply as a reaction to an external threat but as an internal psychological process.

The following statement from *Qo'rqma* illustrates the connection between fear and moral responsibility:

"No... I must still save them... I must rescue them from those parasites. O my God, until the Day of Judgment, the homeland is entrusted to us; betraying it is the Judgment itself!"

The passage demonstrates that the protagonist's psychological tension is connected with his perception of historical responsibility. The emotional experience therefore acquires a broader semantic dimension: fear is related to the possibility of moral failure and the repetition of historical mistakes. In this context, fear becomes closely associated with responsibility, memory, and the future of the homeland.

Another important contextual manifestation is the protagonist's fear concerning the younger generation and the future of society. The narrator's reflections demonstrate that fear may move from the individual psychological level toward a social level. Thus, the emotional state of one character becomes connected with a broader concern about collective values, education, social responsibility, and national development.

Fear and Existential Anxiety in Ozod

The representation of fear in Isajon Sulton's *Ozod* demonstrates a different contextual and semantic configuration. Here, fear is associated less directly with historical trauma and more strongly with existential and spiritual concerns. The protagonist's anxiety emerges from the possibility of failing to understand the meaning of human existence, living without spiritual development, or becoming incapable of benefiting others.

The episode involving the group referred to as *Malomatchilar* is particularly significant in this respect. *Ozod* encounters people who live primarily to satisfy their

physical needs and fail to understand what the narrative presents as the deeper meaning of life. His response is not simply dislike or rejection; it is accompanied by fear that he might become similar to them.

The protagonist states:

"Never urge me to turn my face in their direction... Lead me, if you wish, into the midst of Gog and Magog, or guide me toward the bottomless rivers beneath the earth but keep me far away from these people".

The contextual meaning of fear in this passage differs from fear caused by physical danger. Ozod would rather confront mythical or physically dangerous spaces than lose his spiritual and intellectual orientation. Fear therefore becomes an indicator of his moral values. It reveals what the protagonist considers the most serious threat: not physical destruction, but spiritual emptiness and loss of self-awareness.

This example demonstrates the importance of contextual interpretation. The lexical meaning of fear alone cannot fully explain the protagonist's psychological state. The meaning emerges through the opposition between physical danger and spiritual degradation. Consequently, fear acquires an existential and moral dimension.

Fear, Personal Relationships, and Emotional Uncertainty

Fear in literary discourse may also arise from personal relationships and the possibility of emotional loss. In *Qo'rqma*, the narrator's reflections concerning Lola demonstrate this form of fear:

"I keep thinking about Lola. Perhaps she, too, has grown tired of me... Perhaps she never loved me at all and only pitied my untimely laughter".

Here fear is represented through uncertainty rather than through an explicit description of physical danger. The repeated speculation concerning Lola's feelings constructs a psychological state of emotional insecurity. The narrator fears rejection, loss of affection, and the possibility that his previous understanding of the relationship was mistaken.

This example demonstrates that fear may be represented through interrogative or speculative thinking. Expressions equivalent to "perhaps" and the repetition of alternative possibilities create a semantic environment of uncertainty. Thus, contextual fear can emerge from the anticipation of an unwanted outcome even when no immediate external threat exists.

Fear as a Social and Historical Phenomenon

The analysis further indicates that fear can transcend the individual psychological sphere and acquire social and historical significance. In *Qo'rqma*, references to repression, political pressure, and the historical fate of students transform fear into a collective experience. The narrator connects individual decisions with the broader historical circumstances that shaped the lives of previous generations.

The following reflection illustrates this transition from individual fear to social meaning:

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"If everyone continues to flee the homeland out of fear of death... when will we sail in our own submarines or fly in our own aircraft?"

In this context, fear is associated with the consequences of avoiding danger and choosing personal safety. The semantic content of fear is therefore determined by its relationship with social responsibility. The protagonist does not perceive fear simply as an individual emotion; it becomes part of a broader reflection on collective development and historical experience.

The discussion of the totalitarian past further expands this meaning. The source material describes a social environment in which political pressure, ideological control, and historical repression generated widespread anxiety. Within the literary representation, such circumstances transform personal fear into a form of collective psychological experience. The individual's inner state is thus connected with the social and historical conditions surrounding him.

Linguistic Indicators of Psychological Fear

The examined examples demonstrate that fear is represented through several interconnected linguistic mechanisms. The first is direct lexical nomination, in which fear or a related psychological state is explicitly named. The second is contextual nomination, where the emotional state becomes apparent from the surrounding narrative. The third is inner discourse, through which fear is represented as a thought process involving uncertainty, memory, speculation, or self-questioning. The fourth is behavioral and physiological representation, where fear is conveyed through actions and bodily reactions.

These mechanisms frequently operate together. A lexical expression of fear may be strengthened by a description of physical reaction, while inner speech may explain the reason for the emotional state. Such interaction creates a multilayered representation of psychological experience.

The analysis also shows that fear may perform different functions within narrative structure. It can introduce or intensify internal conflict, reveal a character's values, motivate decisions, increase psychological tension, and prepare the narrative for a significant turning point. Fear may therefore be both a semantic phenomenon at the linguistic level and a structural phenomenon at the level of narrative organization.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the representation of fear in Uzbek prose is characterized by semantic variability and contextual dependence. Fear-related vocabulary cannot be interpreted adequately through dictionary meaning alone because the emotional content of an expression is shaped by the character's situation, psychological state, relationships, and the wider social context.

The comparison of Qo'rqma and Ozod demonstrates two distinct contextual configurations of fear. In Qo'rqma, fear is strongly connected with historical memory, social responsibility, personal relationships, and collective concerns. In Ozod, fear is more closely associated with existential uncertainty, spiritual development, self-awareness, and the possibility of moral or intellectual emptiness. These differences demonstrate that the same

general emotional category can acquire different semantic and pragmatic functions depending on the literary context.

At the same time, both works demonstrate that fear is closely connected with the representation of the protagonist's inner world. It can reveal hidden anxieties, moral concerns, personal vulnerabilities, and attitudes toward society. Fear consequently functions not only as an emotional experience but also as a linguistic and artistic mechanism of characterization.

The results also support the distinction between explicit and implicit representation of fear. Explicit representation depends primarily on emotion-related lexical units, whereas implicit representation is constructed through inner speech, contextual associations, behavioral descriptions, uncertainty, memory, and symbolic opposition. The combination of these forms makes the representation of fear semantically rich and psychologically complex.

Thus, the lexical-semantic and contextual analysis of fear demonstrates that its function in Uzbek prose extends beyond the simple designation of an emotional state. Fear participates in the construction of psychological characterization and contributes to the representation of personal, moral, social, historical, and existential meanings within literary discourse.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that fear in 20th-century Uzbek prose represents a complex linguistic, psychological, and contextual phenomenon. Its representation is not limited to the direct naming of an emotional state but is realized through a wide range of lexical, semantic, contextual, and discourse-level means. The analysis confirms that fear-related expressions acquire their precise emotional and semantic meanings through interaction with the surrounding literary context.

The lexical-semantic analysis shows that the vocabulary associated with fear includes units referring to different forms and degrees of emotional experience, including fear, apprehension, anxiety, dread, panic, and psychological tension. Although these units are semantically related, they are not functionally identical. Their use enables authors to distinguish different levels of emotional intensity and different psychological conditions of literary characters.

The contextual analysis further demonstrates that fear can be expressed both explicitly and implicitly. Explicit representation involves lexical units that directly name fear or related emotional states, whereas implicit representation is constructed through inner speech, hesitation, silence, repetition, speculation, descriptions of physiological reactions, behavioral changes, memories, and symbolic images. Such contextual indicators often provide additional semantic information that cannot be identified from the lexical meaning of an individual word alone.

The analysis of Qo'rqma and Ozod demonstrates that fear may acquire different meanings depending on the psychological and narrative context. In Qo'rqma, it is closely

associated with historical memory, personal responsibility, social pressure, emotional uncertainty, and collective concerns. In Ozod, fear is more strongly connected with existential questions, spiritual development, self-awareness, and the possibility of moral and intellectual emptiness. These differences confirm the context-dependent nature of emotional meaning in literary discourse.

The study also establishes that fear contributes significantly to the linguistic representation of the protagonist's inner world. It reveals psychological conflict, moral concerns, personal vulnerability, and attitudes toward social and historical reality. At the same time, fear can intensify narrative tension, motivate character decisions, and contribute to the development of psychological characterization.

Therefore, fear in Uzbek prose should be considered not only as a literary motif or psychological state but also as a multidimensional linguistic phenomenon. Its lexical-semantic structure and contextual realization provide important evidence for understanding how emotional experience is verbalized in literary discourse. The combination of lexical-semantic and contextual approaches consequently offers a productive framework for further research into the language of emotions and the linguistic representation of psychological states in Uzbek literature.

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