

PAPER

LINGUO-COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the linguistic concepts of **seme (literal meaning)** and **figurative meaning**, emphasizing their distinctions, linguistic functions, and expressive potentials within texts. Using Nazar Eshonqul's literary works as objects of study, the paper highlights metaphorical connections, cognitive associations, and sources of imagery within texts.

Key words: cognitive linguistics, metaphor, cognitive metaphor, semantic inertia, literary text, seme, literal meaning, figurative meaning, referent.

Introduction

Literary texts serve not merely to narrate events but also to evoke vivid imagery and deepen layers of meaning in the reader's mind. Figurative language and metaphors play a crucial role in this process. The concept of "semantic inertia," proposed by linguist D. Khudoyberganova, emerges as a significant scientific term for a deeper understanding of literary semantics. According to her definition, an expression initially used in a figurative sense continues to influence subsequent sentences, sustaining the metaphorical meaning through coherence. This phenomenon—semantic inertia—is essential for ensuring the internal logical and figurative unity of literary texts.

Every word conveys a certain meaning. This meaning is generally divided into two main types: seme (the basic, literal meaning) and figurative meaning (extended, expressive sense). In linguistics, these two layers significantly contribute to vocabulary formation, expressive speech, and precise thought articulation.

A seme is the simplest, directly understood lexical meaning of a word. For instance, the seme of "heart" refers literally to the organ in the human body. Figurative meaning, however, involves using this same word in a symbolic or imaginative context: "a big-hearted person" implies courage or kindness.

This article comprehensively discusses the functional importance of semantic inertia in literary texts, exploring the semantic continuity it creates, the branching of imagery, and its impact on readers' cognition. Examples illustrate the creative and cognitive mechanisms underlying this phenomenon.

Researcher D. Khudoyberganova, in her study of metaphorical expressions, proposes introducing a new term into linguistics—"semantic inertia." The researcher explains this term as follows: "An expression used metaphorically at the beginning of a text influences the semantics of subsequent sentences. Specifically, repeated metaphorical expressions, driven by coherence, carry their metaphorical meanings into the following sentences."

Indeed, numerous cognitive metaphorical constructions arising from semantic inertia can be observed in the works of Nazar Eshonqul. For instance, "All of us wish to be strong and great, thus we build the house of our life, erect pillars capable of supporting eternity, yet one day, upon reflection, we find the tent we intended was destroyed before it was even built." (Qora kitob). Here, the referent "house of life" (human life) demands the metaphorical expressions "build" (to live) and "destroyed" (mistakes) in subsequent sentences, a clear result of semantic inertia.

"Therefore, I desired to see her every day, cooling the embers within the firebox of my heart, ready to burst into flames." (Qora kitob). In this example, the referent "firebox of the heart" (the heart itself) compels the expressions "embers" (feelings) and "cooling" (renouncing) in following sentences due to semantic inertia.

"In these moments, I wanted to define clearly the borders of virtue, learn from my weakness before Satan, and at least for the rest of my life, tear apart the net of negligence." (Qora kitob). Here, the referent "net of negligence" (negligence itself) necessitates

the subsequent metaphorical expression "tear apart"(abandon) through semantic inertia.

"A certain magical power severed the threads of discontent in their hearts: people worked, accepted whatever was given, visited theaters and cinemas, listened to songs, but did not rebel."(Bitik). In this passage, the referent "threads of discontent"(discontent) requires the following expression "severed"(abandon), again due to semantic inertia.

"Love is a tulip blossoming within the human heart. If it fades, life itself fades... For four years, tulips in my heart have bloomed into entire gardens."(Oq alanga). The referent "tulip"(love) here invokes the subsequent metaphorical expressions "fade"(to disappear) and "bloom"(to emerge), illustrating semantic inertia.

For instance, "Sometimes your face is a flower, your hair resembling layers of petals cradling this white flower; petals sway so delicately that sometimes they tremble. As the petals quiver, the flower's slender stem appears."(Oq alanga). Here, the referent "flower"(human face) necessitates subsequent metaphorical expressions like "petals"(hair) and "flower's slender stem"(girl's figure), driven by semantic inertia.

For example, "Was it necessary first to enchant the reader, then plunge them into fears and turmoil, to hang flags of fear and obsession upon the castles of their hearts, to sow seeds of despair and hopelessness into the already tangled fields of their lives, and roast an already scorched heart upon the pages?"(Qalb to'zoni). In this passage, the referent "castles of hearts"(heart) demands subsequent expressions such as "flags of fear and obsession"(fear and obsession), "hang"(to impose); "fields of life"(human life) compels metaphorical expressions like "seeds of despair and hopelessness"(despair and hopelessness) and "sow"(to impose)—each clearly resulting from semantic inertia.

Semantic inertia in literary texts—the persistence of a metaphorically initiated phrase that maintains metaphorical and semantic weight in subsequent sentences—is an essential linguistic phenomenon determining depth, coherence, and expressiveness in literary language. This phenomenon influences the reader's cognitive processes, ensures continuous development of imagery, and strengthens the overall semantic environment of the text. In the works of authors like Nazar Eshonqul, semantic inertia functions actively not only as a literary device but also as a cognitive structure and creative linguistic construction. Each metaphorical introduction retains its semantic potency throughout the text, interacting seamlessly with other images, expressions, and contexts.

Indeed, numerous cognitive metaphorical constructions resulting from semantic inertia can be observed in Nazar Eshonqul's works. For instance:

"With the hope of falling in love again, I opened the door of my heart to many girls. However, this door did not let them in, or I could not enter through theirs."("Tun panjaralari")

Here, the referent "door of my heart"(heart) demands subsequent expressions such as "opened"(opened emotionally) and "did not let them in"(did not accept), illustrating semantic inertia clearly.

This phenomenon can be further observed in the subsequent sentences:

"My heart soured, and eventually became infested. Worms consumed every living thing there. They devoured my dream-tree, which had just begun to blossom, right before my eyes, and left me abandoned in this desolate nocturnal solitude."

In this passage, the referent "dream-tree"(dreams) necessitates subsequent metaphorical expressions "devoured"(destroyed) and "left abandoned"(left in despair), again exemplifying semantic inertia.

A similar pattern is evident in the following example:

"Thus, I often find myself peering through the tiny window of my childhood home, back towards Robiya, longing for those happiest moments of my life."

Here, the referent "tiny window of childhood home"(memories) requires the subsequent expression "peering through"(remembering), demonstrating semantic inertia.

In another example: "Searching for myself, I scattered across countless streets of destiny, as though innumerable 'selves' emerged from within me, vanishing into the labyrinthine alleys of the city."

In this sentence, the referent "countless streets of destiny"(trials) compels the subsequent metaphorical expression "scattered"(encountered), illustrating semantic inertia clearly.

In yet another instance: "The trouble is, our roots have been cut. They were severed and grafted onto another tree. The blood of an alien tree circulates within us. This is why our flowers fall prematurely."("Tun panjaralari")

Here, the referent "roots"(culture) demands subsequent metaphorical expressions "cut"(destroyed) and "grafted onto another tree"(altered), clearly indicating semantic inertia.

As examined in the article, semantic inertia—the phenomenon where a phrase initiated metaphorically influences the entire semantic structure of a text—is particularly evident in literary discourse. In works by authors like Nazar Eshonqul, this phenomenon ensures semantic continuity, textual coherence, and powerful expression of figurative thinking. Thus, semantic inertia is not merely a stylistic device but a significant linguistic phenomenon shaping the internal logical and figurative structure of the text. A deeper study of this phenomenon aids in understanding how figurative meanings emerge, evolve, and impact textual semantics.

In conclusion, seme (literal meaning) and figurative meaning are intrinsically interconnected, enriching the semantic layers of language and enhancing imagery and expressiveness. Linguistically, examining these two layers separately is essential for comprehending word usage, aesthetic power of speech, and expansion of semantic scope.

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