

## Metaphors and their Semantic Analysis in the Poetry of Zebo Mirzo

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### ABSTRACT

*In literary creation, words often transcend their basic nominative function to actively participate in the construction of new artistic imagery. This process reveals the internal semantic potential of each word, allowing various semantic components to shift in prominence according to the author's artistic intent. Such transformation is most clearly seen in metaphors. A metaphor serves as a carrier of information about the unseen world, and its unique role in poetry lies in its ability to implicitly combine a wide range of perspectives and assumptions about existence. Through this contrastive process, both the similarities and differences between referents become apparent. This article presents a semantic analysis of metaphors found in the poetry of Zebo Mirzo.*

**Keywords:** Metaphor, literary creativity, metaphorical trope, poetry, semantic transformation.

### INTRODUCTION

The metaphor is an organic (natural) means of artistic perception of the world [1]. The poetic world of a particular author is perceived and understood through metaphors that are unique to that writer. For example, N. Wilmont, in her attempt to understand B. Pasternak's poetry, refers to his concept of panmetaphorics [2].

There are many such approaches in literary studies; for instance, R. O. Jakobson's interpretation of V. Mayakovsky's works through the sequence of metaphors can also be cited.

In other words, metaphor is a distinctive lens, a method through which each writer or poet sees and expresses the world. Moreover, the unique “dialect” of poetry is often shaped precisely through metaphors.

For literature, metaphor functions as a trope, while in linguistics and other cognitive sciences, it is regarded as a phenomenon of thinking. Structurally, tropes in literature can be divided into two types: those based on metonymy and those grounded in metaphor.

Tropes formed through metonymy indicate a whole by referencing certain elements such as volume, shape, line, and similar features. For instance, a character’s portrait described in an epic can convey an overall image of the person.

In metaphorical tropes, however, the meanings of words undergo transformations. Due to similarity, analogy, or associative connections, a semantic shift occurs, establishing relationships between objects that might initially seem unrelated or even irrelevant.

In such cases, it is usually easy to identify and interpret symmetrical thoughts, while understanding asymmetrical ones may prove more challenging.

It is well known that the metaphorical shift triggered by subjective impressions has been studied in the works of R. Z. Miller-Budnitskaya, L. M. Granovskaya, N. A. Kozhevnikova, S. B. Karavayeva, I. N. Gorelov, and T. R. Stepanyan.

These researchers systematically examine metaphors in literary texts and explain the linguistic features of such shifts through the phenomenon of synesthesia [3].

“In the Uzbek language, when a metaphor occurs in speech, this phenomenon is characterized by the emergence of a pragmatic seme within the derived sememe. For example, lexemes such as *sher* (lion), *burgut* (eagle), *loch*in (falcon), *ohu* (gazelle), and *qashqir* (wolf) form a sememe that denotes a person, while *la’l* (ruby), *charos* (diamond), *bodom* (almond), and *gul* (flower) metaphorically represent parts of the human body. These derived sememes carry a pragmatic meaning” [4].

When discussing methods of semantic shift, metaphor holds a central position among them.

Uzbek poetry is one of the key branches of national literature, reflecting the spiritual world of the people, their inner emotions, and reflections on life.

In the modern era, where poetic means of artistic expression offer broader opportunities to explore the human psyche, new dimensions of Uzbek poetry are emerging. In the post-independence period, Uzbek poetry has increasingly harmonized national and universal values, artistically portraying the spiritual experiences of individuals alongside philosophical reflections.

Through the creative pursuits of poets, the social, moral, and spiritual needs of the people are being expressed in literary works. When examining the influence of independence on literature, one can observe an expansion of creative freedom among poets, greater diversity in poetic imagery, and a deeper engagement with emotional and psychological expression.

Themes and experiences that were previously suppressed due to censorship and ideological constraints are now freely articulated. As a result, contemporary Uzbek poetry differs significantly from that of earlier periods. Poets are striving to portray the inner world of individuals and their emotional experiences on a broader and more profound level. In expressing the poet's inner spiritual state, literary devices such as symbols, allegories, similes, and metaphors play a central role. These elements deepen the poetic expression, enrich layers of meaning, and invite readers to reflect and contemplate.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Linguists generally agree on the classification of metaphors into poetic and linguistic types [5]. Based on the dichotomy of language and speech, scholars interpret poetic metaphor as a phenomenon of speech, while emphasizing the significance of linguistic metaphor for linguistic analysis [6].

In Uzbek linguistics, new approaches to semantic shift are emerging as a result of treating language as a linguistic reflection

of reality and the rise of linguocultural perspectives. Semantic shift is viewed as a phenomenon with a specific frame-based structure in the text, involving the activation of unique semantic-stylistic, cognitive, and national cultural components on the surface level of language.

It serves to enliven speech, enhance artistic expression, and increase emotional and expressive depth. Semantic shift is a linguistic and cognitive tool that facilitates the emergence of new word meanings [7].

Literary scholar G. Ernazarova identifies three key factors underlying the emergence of metaphors: real-life reality, a system of religious, mythological, and imaginary concepts, and the poet or author's individual subjectivity. The evolutionary development of national poetry clearly illustrates that the acceleration and intensification of metaphorization are directly shaped by the socio-political context. Factors such as restrictions on freedom of thought, the absence of legal rights, and deep-rooted tensions between the individual and society play a significant role in this process [8].

Emotional experience holds a central place in poetry. The internal processes of the human soul – emotions, excitement and joy, fear and hope – are vividly reflected in the work of poets. These inner experiences are often expressed through symbolic imagery and philosophical generalizations.

As early as the beginning of the 20th century, the Jadids advocated for bringing literary language closer to the vernacular. They promoted the use of native equivalents instead of borrowed words and aimed to minimize the use of foreign terms, emphasizing the preservation of linguistic purity. These principles are clearly reflected in their writings.

The artistic style is essentially the language of a literary work. The language of such works varies depending on their genre. In epic literature, features of all stylistic varieties are typically present, encompassing a wide range of linguistic elements. In contrast, the language of lyrical poetry differs significantly. The syntactic structure of epic works is notably distinct from that of lyrical texts. Epic texts usually follow a

conventional sentence structure, often incorporating complex constructions and frequent use of adverbial phrases. Although figurative meanings and emotionally expressive elements are common in epic style, they do not form the core of poetic syntax in these works.

In poetic discourse, when the word order primarily serves the purpose of maintaining metrical structure, its function of conveying “actual division” (information structure) significantly weakens or may even disappear entirely. In such cases, the arrangement of sentence elements becomes more flexible, and the normative word order characteristic of prose often breaks down, even within the boundaries of common phrase structures.

In poetry, word order is considered one of the most important elements of meaning expression. From a stylistic perspective, it also serves to add nuance to the sentence, enhancing or diminishing the semantic weight of specific components. In syntax, sentence elements generally follow either a conventional or altered order, and may exhibit contact (adjacent) or distant (non-adjacent) placement patterns.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Let us turn our attention to Zebo Mirzo’s poem ‘To My Mother.’

*Oq sochlari oppoq tun uning,  
Umri halol ishqqa bayroqdir.  
Oh, yuzlari dunyoyi dunning  
Go’zalidan chiqoyliroqdir.  
(Bo’lolmadim hasasasichalik)  
Otam dardın ko’targan mohim,  
Ushoqqina onam ko’ngliga  
Bir hovuch nur bergil, ilohim! [9]*

In the first line, we observe the modifier (attribute) following the word it modifies – an instance of non-standard word order. The second line follows a conventional syntactic structure. The third and fourth lines together form a single sentence, also constructed in the usual word order. In the following line, the predicate

appears in a shifted position, forming one sentence together with the subsequent line. The remaining lines generally reflect standard syntactic order.

If we rearrange the lines to reflect conventional prose word order, the passage would read as follows:

"Her white hair is as bright as snow; her life is a flag of honest love; her face is more beautiful than the most charming woman in the world; I was not even as supportive of my father's pain as my mother's walking stick. May God grant a handful of light to my dear mother's pure heart."

As with any linguistic phenomenon, it is essential to distinguish between the primary and secondary functions of word order. When examining the expressive capacities of different types of word order, it becomes necessary to classify them according to the functions they perform. Turning to the views of O. B. Sirotinina, she identifies three main functions of word order in written discourse.

1. **Communicative function:** to determine the relevance of a linguistic unit within the process of communication and interaction;
2. **Stylistic function:** to ensure stylistic coloring and expressive nuance;
3. **Grammatical function:** to facilitate the formation and structural integrity of word combinations.

In our view, unlike prose, the primary function of word order in poetry is grammatical – that is, the formation of sentence components. Its secondary function is communicative, involving the establishment of interaction and relational structure between elements. The third function pertains to stylistic expressiveness, contributing to emotional impact, as well as the creation of meter, rhyme, and various poetic devices.

In Zebo Mirzo's poetry, in order to enhance emotional impact and draw the reader's attention to the core semantic elements, each syntactic unit is often placed on a separate line.

*Nima bo'пти,*  
*eslamasangiz?*  
*Nima bo'пти,*  
*qarab qo'yamasam?*  
*Dilingizda tosharmidi his,*  
*Siz deb kuysam*  
*yoki kuymasam?*  
*Menga la'nat bo'lgan bu ishqdan*  
*Yonib ketsa hayotim beiz,*  
*Butun umr sevib o'tsam-u,*  
*Bir lahza ham*  
*sevolmasangiz...*  
*Nima bo'пти,*  
*men sizning emas,*  
*Sevgingizning bo'lsam tutquni?*

In the first two lines, words are used in their conventional syntactic order, and the presence of a lyrical subject amplifies the emotional intensity of the poem. The poet places the key words that reflect the lyrical hero's true intention each on a separate line to emphasize their importance. Additionally, the repetition of the phrase *Nima bo'пти* ("So what?") serves as a major stylistic tool in conveying the poet's bitterly ironic tone. The use of internal ellipsis effectively encapsulates the lyrical subject's sorrowful irony and deep emotional anguish. At the same time, within the interplay of contrasting inner feelings, we can observe the use of antithesis as a rhetorical device. In a subsequent line, the inversion of subject and predicate reflects the complexity of the character's emotional state. Furthermore, the lines built on the contrast between "if I burn" (*kuysam*) and "if I don't" (*kuymasam*) illustrate a gradation of emotional intensity.

In the line *Yonib ketsa hayotim beiz* ("If my life burns away in vain"), the adverb *beiz* (in vain) is placed after the predicate, emphasizing the emotional state of the lyrical subject. This construction reinforces the psychological depth of the character's condition. The tone of bitter irony intensifies, as the lyrical persona appears to act with noble self-sacrifice – giving everything they have – yet expecting nothing in return.

*Sevib o'tsam,  
 sevib o'psam mast  
 Xayolimda saqlab men uni?  
 Kipriklarim yumsam,  
 U hozir  
 Huzurimda bo'ladi paydo:*

The lyrical subject does not feel ashamed of their love, nor of the devotion they have offered. They openly express their sincerity and internal emotional standards, hiding nothing from others. The inversion of the predicate structure draws even more attention from the reader, as the disruption of an otherwise stable and expected construction creates a striking stylistic effect. Burning in the fire of unfulfilled hopes, the lyrical subject is left with almost no hope. When they imagine closing their eyes and their beloved appearing before them – not phrased as “appears before me”, but instead as “before me appears” – the emotional and expressive force of the line is significantly amplified. At the end of the poem, the poet skillfully utilizes the expressive capacities of written discourse to articulate the lyrical subject’s ultimate emotional state. Yet the author deliberately refrains from enumerating, analyzing, or overtly presenting this experience – leaving it instead to resonate implicitly within the reader.

*Qo'l siltamang...  
 kulmang...  
 achinmang...  
 Achinaman men sizga ko'proq,  
 Sevilgan-u buyuk ishq bilan,  
 Sevilganin bilmagan biroq!..*

The lyrical subject cannot be said to be tired of the beloved’s indifference, appearance, or emotional cruelty. Instead, they feel pity and compassion toward the beloved. To love is a sacred refuge; to be loved is an even greater blessing. The shift in word order carries significant artistic weight, guiding the reader into the delicate boundaries of human intimacy and emotion. It becomes a journey into the most subtle realms of inner feeling.

## CONCLUSIONS

In poetic works, word order – recognized as one of the most important features of poetic syntax – must be studied as an independent category. In this regard, the issue of word order has been explored in the creative works of several Uzbek writers. Phenomena such as repetition, alliteration, and rhyme, which are often analyzed alongside word order, should not be treated in isolation from one another. In artistic literature, every stylistic device is directly or indirectly connected to others. Attempting to separate these elements disregards the integrated nature of poetic expression and contradicts the artistic truth of literature.

In Zebo Mirzo's poetry, metaphor functions as a cognitive phenomenon and a means of perceiving the world. It embodies a harmony of complex imagery, conveys specific plots and realities in their authentic form, shapes the internal structure of poetic discourse, generates expressive nominations, and reflects subjective modality. Moreover, metaphor reveals the abstract through clarity and the clear through abstraction.

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