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Semantic Innovation in Contemporary Uzbek Poetry: A Cognitive-Linguistic Study of Occasional Derivation

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ABSTRACT

This article examines semantic innovation in contemporary Uzbek poetry through the phenomenon of occasional derivation, with particular attention to the interaction between lexical semantics, poetic context, metaphorical conceptualization, and embodied experience. The study focuses on selected poetic fragments by Zebo Mirzo and Mirzo Kenjabek and asks how established Uzbek lexical forms acquire context-dependent meanings that are not reducible to their conventional dictionary senses. The central argument is that semantic occasional derivation should be distinguished from both formal word formation and conventional metaphor: an occasional meaning emerges when a familiar lexical unit is conceptually restructured by a highly specific poetic context and thereby performs a new semantic function. A qualitative close-reading methodology is combined with cognitive-semantic analysis. The analysis identifies recurrent conceptual mappings including emotional suffering is physical burden, emotional need is physical thirst, emotional pain is physical injury, emotional experience is sensory taste, psychological memory is physical space, and nature represents human emotion. The findings show that contemporary Uzbek poets frequently create semantic innovations by transferring bodily, spatial, sensory, and natural experience into abstract emotional domains. Such innovations are not merely ornamental: they compress complex affective meanings, intensify subjectivity, and invite readers to reconstruct an individual poetic conceptualization. The article proposes operational criteria for identifying semantic occasional

derivation and demonstrates how a cognitive-linguistic approach can clarify the relationship between lexical convention and poetic creativity in Uzbek.

Keywords: Uzbek poetry, occasional derivation, semantic innovation, occasionalism, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, poetic language, lexical semantics, semantic extension, embodied cognition

INTRODUCTION

Poetic language is one of the most productive environments for semantic innovation because poets routinely reorganize conventional linguistic material in order to represent experiences that resist direct naming. A lexical item that is semantically stable in ordinary communication may acquire a sharply individualized interpretation when it is placed in an unexpected syntactic, collocational, or conceptual environment. The resulting meaning is often recognizable to the reader even though it cannot be fully predicted from the conventional lexical entry. This tension between convention and innovation is central to the linguistic study of poetry.

In Uzbek poetry, semantic innovation is especially visible in expressions that transfer bodily experience into emotional and existential domains. Verbs of physical action, nouns denoting material objects, and words associated with sensory perception can be recruited to conceptualize love, separation, death, memory, regret, and inner suffering. From a cognitive-linguistic perspective, these cases are not random semantic deviations. They can be interpreted as contextually motivated mappings between experiential domains, often grounded in embodied knowledge [3: 84-95; 5: 1-18; 6: 1-24; 8: 3-6].

In this article, I examine this phenomenon under the concept of semantic occasional derivation. The term is used here in a restricted analytical sense. It does not refer to every metaphorical expression, nor does it refer to every rare word. Rather, it denotes a context-bound semantic innovation in which an established lexical form is assigned a new, poetically motivated semantic

configuration. The innovation becomes visible through the interaction of the lexical item with its immediate context, the wider poetic situation, and the conceptual frame activated by the poem.

The study is based on selected examples from poems by Zebo Mirzo and Mirzo Kenjabek. The choice of these poets is methodologically useful because their texts provide concentrated examples of emotional states being represented through bodily action, sensory perception, physical space, and natural phenomena. The analysis therefore moves from the linguistic form of the expression to its contextual interpretation and then to the underlying cognitive model.

The research addresses four questions: 1) What linguistic conditions make semantic occasional derivation identifiable in contemporary Uzbek poetry? 2) How do contextual meanings differ from conventional metaphorical meanings? 3) What conceptual mappings organize the analyzed innovations? and 4) What poetic and cognitive functions do these innovations perform?

The contribution I seek to make is to treating semantic occasional derivation as a distinct analytical category between ordinary polysemy and purely formal occasional word formation. The article combines lexical-semantic description with cognitive modeling and proposes a set of practical criteria for distinguishing an individualized poetic meaning from a conventional figurative usage. In doing so, it contributes to the study of Uzbek poetic language and to broader discussions of creativity, semantic extension, and conceptualization.

The discussion is arranged as follows. Section 2 reviews relevant approaches to derivation, occasionalism, lexical semantics, and cognitive linguistics. Section 3 describes the corpus and analytical procedure. Section 4 presents detailed analyses of the selected poetic examples. Section 5 synthesizes the examples into cognitive-semantic models. Section 6 discusses occasionality and conventionality, while Section 7 considers the poetic functions of semantic innovation. The final section summarizes the findings and identifies directions for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Derivation, productivity, and linguistic creativity

Derivation is traditionally associated with the creation of new lexical items through morphological operations. In this sense, derivational morphology establishes a formal relationship between a base and a derived form and contributes to the expansion of the lexicon. Contemporary morphological theory, however, emphasizes that lexical creativity cannot be reduced to a mechanical list of productive affixes. Productivity is conditioned by semantic, phonological, syntactic, and discourse factors, while speakers may exploit existing patterns in innovative ways [2: 33-48; 7: 585-600; 11: 1-12].

For poetic language, the distinction between formal derivation and semantic innovation is particularly important. A poet can create a new word by adding an affix, but the poet can also create novelty without changing the external form of the lexical item. In the latter case, the innovation lies in semantic reconfiguration. The same lexical form is made to denote or evoke a conceptual content that is highly dependent on a specific context. This article treats such cases as semantic rather than morphological derivation.

The distinction is compatible with a broader understanding of linguistic creativity. Creativity may operate through formal combination, lexical selection, syntactic restructuring, semantic extension, and contextual reinterpretation. A poetic innovation is therefore not necessarily a new dictionary word. It can be a new use of an existing word whose interpretation depends on a deliberate departure from conventional selectional expectations [7; 8].

Occasionalism and semantic occasional derivation

Occasionalisms are generally understood as units created or used for a particular communicative situation and often characterized by limited distribution. Their occasional character may be formal, semantic, pragmatic, or contextual. The crucial property is not simply rarity but dependence on a specific act of discourse. A form may be rare yet conventional, whereas an expression may

be structurally ordinary but semantically occasional because its intended interpretation is constructed locally in context.

This distinction motivates the present definition of semantic occasional derivation: it is a contextually motivated reinterpretation of an existing lexical form in which its conventional semantic potential is extended, redirected, or conceptually restructured to express an individual poetic meaning. Three criteria follow from this definition. First, the lexical form itself must be established in the language. Second, the relevant interpretation must exceed or redirect its conventional lexical profile. Third, the innovation must be recoverable from the immediate poetic context rather than from a stable dictionary meaning alone.

These criteria also provide a safeguard against overclassification. A conventional metaphor that is widely established in Uzbek cannot automatically be treated as an occasionalism. Likewise, a word that is simply uncommon does not become an occasional semantic formation by virtue of frequency. The analyst must demonstrate a context-specific semantic shift and explain how the poetic environment motivates it.

Semantic occasional derivation can thus be positioned between lexical semantics and discourse interpretation. It is narrower than general semantic change, because the innovation is tied to a particular context, but broader than formal word formation, because no new morphological structure is necessarily involved. The category is especially useful for poetry because poetic meaning frequently emerges through the tension between what a word conventionally means and what it is made to mean in a particular textual environment.

Cognitive semantics and poetic conceptualization

Cognitive linguistics treats meaning as grounded in conceptualization rather than as an autonomous property of linguistic forms. From this perspective, lexical meaning is flexible because speakers organize experience through frames, domains, image schemas, metaphorical mappings, and embodied patterns of attention [3: 6-17; 4: 57-86; 5: 1-18; 8: 3-6; 9: 1-20].

A poetic innovation can therefore be analyzed as a special configuration of conceptual resources rather than as an arbitrary semantic anomaly.

Conceptual metaphor theory is particularly relevant because many emotional concepts are structured through more concrete domains. Love, grief, longing, anger, and memory are repeatedly represented in terms of physical force, spatial movement, temperature, bodily injury, weight, containment, and sensory experience [4: 57-86; 8: 3-6]. However, the present study does not assume that every such metaphor is an occasionalism. The cognitive model explains how an interpretation is constructed; occasionality is established by the degree of contextual specificity and semantic reconfiguration.

The notion of embodied cognition further explains why physical and sensory vocabulary is productive in emotional poetry. Human beings experience thirst, pressure, heat, pain, touch, movement, and spatial containment directly through the body. These experiences provide cognitively accessible structures for representing less tangible emotional states. A poet can therefore recruit a concrete bodily frame and map it onto an abstract affective situation, allowing readers to reconstruct the intended emotion through experiential simulation [3: 246-261; 4: 57-86; 5: 1-18; 8: 3-6; 10: 1-15].

Frame semantics and constructional approaches add another dimension. The interpretation of an innovative expression depends not only on an individual lexical item but also on the frame activated by its surrounding construction. A verb of physical action may acquire an emotional interpretation because the object, experiencer, and contextual predicates collectively force a reinterpretation. This is why the unit of analysis in the present study is the poetic expression in context rather than the isolated word.

Conceptual blending theory is also relevant to the analyzed examples. Blending allows elements from different conceptual spaces to be selectively projected into an emergent structure [11]. In poetic innovation, a physical action can be blended with an emotional state so that the resulting expression is neither purely literal nor a conventional metaphor. The emergent meaning is

constructed locally and may therefore display the occasional character required for semantic occasional derivation.

METHODOLOGY

My analysis is qualitative. I read the selected poetic passages closely and then relate their contextual meanings to cognitive-semantic models. The empirical material consists of selected poetic fragments supplied from contemporary Uzbek poetry by Zebo Mirzo and Mirzo Kenjabek. The examples were selected because they display a clear contrast between the conventional lexical profile of an expression and its context-specific poetic interpretation.

I organize the analysis in four stages. First, the conventional meaning and semantic frame of the relevant lexical unit are identified. Second, the immediate poetic context is examined to determine what interpretation is required for coherence. Third, the semantic relationship between the conventional and contextual meanings is described in terms of extension, transfer, restructuring, or domain mapping. Fourth, the resulting interpretation is modeled cognitively and its poetic function is established.

The method combines three analytical levels. At the lexical-semantic level, attention is given to the semantic potential of the lexical form. At the contextual level, collocation, syntactic relations, and poetic situation are considered. At the cognitive level, the analysis identifies source and target domains, embodied experience, image schemas, and emergent conceptual structure. This multi-level procedure reduces the risk of treating metaphorical surface form as sufficient evidence of occasionality.

I do not claim statistical representativeness here; the purpose is to explain how particular poetic meanings are constructed in context. Its objective is not to measure the frequency of every metaphor in Uzbek poetry but to explain the mechanisms through which particular semantic innovations become meaningful. I therefore treat the results as an analytical model that can later be tested against a larger corpus of contemporary Uzbek poetry.

For analytical transparency, each example is assessed according to the following diagnostic questions: 1) Is the lexical form conventional? 2) Is the relevant meaning conventional or contextually constructed? 3) Does the expression activate a source domain different from the ordinary lexical domain? 4) Is the new interpretation dependent on the specific poetic context? and 5) What cognitive and poetic function does the reinterpretation perform?

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Death as an object of emotional attachment

Zebo Mirzo's expression *Sevib bo'ldim Sizsiz o'limni* may be translated approximately as "I have come to love death without you." The verb *sevmoq* "to love" conventionally selects an animate or abstract object that can plausibly be conceptualized as desirable, valued, or emotionally attached to the experiencer. The noun *o'lim* "death," by contrast, conventionally denotes the cessation of life and is not normally conceptualized as an object of interpersonal love. The poetic expression therefore creates a strong semantic incompatibility that requires reinterpretation.

The innovation is not simply the metaphor "death is a beloved." The crucial feature is the restructuring of the semantic frame of death through the verb of love. Death is moved from an existential event domain into an affective-object domain. The contextual phrase *sizsiz* "without you" intensifies the reinterpretation because it establishes absence as the causal background for the speaker's altered relation to death. The resulting interpretation can be formulated as EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT IS ORIENTED TOWARD DEATH.

Cognitively, the expression creates an emergent conceptual structure in which an ordinarily negative existential event becomes an emotionally attractive endpoint. The reader is not required to accept death literally as a loved entity. Instead, the semantic frame of love forces death to be conceptualized through desire, attachment, and emotional orientation. Because this interpretation is highly dependent on the poem's situation, the

expression satisfies the contextuality criterion of semantic occasional derivation.

The second expression, *Sevsam endi sevgum O‘limni* (“If I love, now I shall love Death”), reinforces the same conceptual innovation. The repetition of the love predicate makes the reclassification of death explicit. The noun does not acquire a permanent new dictionary sense; its poetic meaning is created through the interaction of the verb, the emotional context, and the existential theme. The occasional semantic effect therefore lies in the local reconfiguration of the noun rather than in formal word formation.

The two examples demonstrate an important principle: an occasional semantic innovation may be distributed across a construction. The noun alone is not necessarily innovative. The innovation emerges from the relationship between the noun *o‘lim*, the verb *sevmoq*, and the discourse context. This point supports a construction-sensitive approach to semantic occasionality.

Death as emotional burden

Another Zebo Mirzo example is *Nasib ekan so‘ngsiz o‘limni/ Tirik vujud bilan ko‘tarmoq*, approximately “If endless death is destined, to carry it with a living body.” Here the verb *ko‘tarmoq* “to carry, lift, bear” normally describes a physical action involving a material object or, by conventional extension, a burden. The noun *o‘lim* “death” is not ordinarily an object that can be physically carried by a living body.

The expression creates a conceptualization in which death becomes a weight or burden. The relevant model is EMOTIONAL SUFFERING IS PHYSICAL BURDEN. The phrase *tirik vujud bilan* “with a living body” strengthens the embodied dimension: the speaker’s living body is presented as the physical bearer of an otherwise abstract existential condition.

Its innovative reading depends on context because the verb *ko‘tarmoq* does not literally select death as a physical object. The poetic context transforms an existential state into a load that can be carried. The reader consequently interprets “carrying death” as enduring, bearing, or living through an overwhelming emotional

and existential condition. The expression thus creates a semantic bridge between bodily effort and psychological endurance.

This example also shows that semantic occasional derivation can intensify an existing metaphorical potential. The verb *ko‘tarmoq* already has an extended sense “to endure/bear” in ordinary language. Yet the combination with *so‘ngsiz o‘limni* and *tirik vujud* produces a more individualized conceptual configuration: the speaker is not merely enduring hardship but physically carrying endless death. The occasional effect lies in the unusual conceptual specification, not in the existence of the general figurative meaning of *ko‘tarmoq*.

Buloqdirsiz: nature as a human frame

The expression *Buloqdirsiz – sokin va beg‘am* can be rendered as “You are a spring – calm and carefree.” The lexical noun *buloq* “spring” conventionally denotes a natural source of flowing water. In the poetic expression, however, it is used as a predicative characterization of a person addressed by the pronoun *siz*. The natural object is therefore mapped onto a human referent.

I interpret the conceptual structure here as NATURE REPRESENTS HUMAN EMOTION. The semantic effect depends on the selection of properties associated with a spring – freshness, continuity, calmness, purity, and natural movement – and their projection onto the addressee. The phrase *sokin va beg‘am* explicitly selects emotional properties, encouraging the reader to interpret *buloq* not as a literal geographical object but as a conceptual image of a person.

This passage is useful because the boundary between metaphor and occasional derivation. *Buloq* is not a newly formed lexical item, and the use of natural objects as human images is a familiar poetic strategy. What makes the expression analytically relevant is the specific semantic configuration in which the lexical frame of a spring is temporarily reorganized around the emotional profile of the addressee. It is therefore best treated as a contextually intensified semantic innovation rather than automatically classified as a new lexical meaning.

Suvsab o'lsam: physical thirst and emotional need

In *Poyingizda suvsab o'lsam ham* ("Even if I die of thirst at your feet"), the verb *suvsamoq* "to be thirsty" conventionally describes a physiological need for water. The poetic context, however, associates thirst with proximity to a beloved person. The physical condition is recruited to represent emotional longing, desire, or dependence.

The cognitive model is EMOTIONAL NEED IS PHYSICAL THIRST. Thirst is particularly productive as a source domain because it represents an urgent bodily need that becomes increasingly salient when satisfaction is unavailable. By placing the speaker at the beloved's feet while simultaneously describing thirst, the poem creates a paradoxical image: physical proximity does not satisfy the deeper emotional need.

What creates the innovation here is a mismatch between the physiological frame of *suvsamoq* and the emotional discourse context. The expression is not merely an instance of the general metaphor DESIRE IS THIRST; its poetic force arises from the specific relation among the speaker, the beloved, physical proximity, and death. The contextual meaning is consequently more individualized than the conventional figurative potential of the verb.

The example also demonstrates how bodily experience functions as an epistemic resource in poetry. The reader understands emotional longing by simulating the urgency of thirst. The semantic innovation thus converts an abstract affective state into an embodied experience and makes the emotion perceptually vivid.

Taste as an emotional evaluation

The phrase *Ishqqa o'xshab ketgan ta'mangiz* may be interpreted as "your taste that has become like love." The noun *ta'm* "taste" conventionally belongs to the sensory domain of gustation. In the poetic context it participates in the conceptualization of love and emotional impression. The result is a cross-modal transfer from sensory perception to affective evaluation.

The model can be represented as EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE IS SENSORY TASTE. The expression does not

simply say that love tastes sweet or bitter. Instead, *ta'm* is used as a conceptual instrument for describing an emotionally recognizable quality. The reader is invited to understand love as something that can be sensed, evaluated, and retained through an embodied sensory frame.

The occasional effect comes from the sensory noun is embedded in a specific emotional construction. The expression is therefore more than a decorative metaphor: it reorganizes the semantic relation between taste and affective experience. This supports the view that semantic innovation may occur through cross-domain integration without any morphological change to the lexical form.

Yuragimni yulib tashlayman: Emotional pain as physical injury

The expression *Yuragimni yulib tashlayman* literally evokes the violent physical removal of the heart. The noun *yurak* "heart" can conventionally refer both to the anatomical organ and to the emotional center of a person. The innovative force of the expression does not therefore lie in the word *yurak* by itself. It emerges from the combination of the emotional frame with the violent physical action expressed by *yulib tashlamoq* "to tear/pull out and throw away."

The underlying model is EMOTIONAL PAIN IS PHYSICAL INJURY. The speaker conceptualizes unbearable emotion as an act of bodily destruction. The expression creates an embodied simulation of emotional extremity: an internal state is represented through a physically impossible but experientially intelligible action.

This passage makes clear that why the unit of analysis must be larger than an isolated lexical item. If *yurak* were automatically classified as an occasionalism whenever it referred to emotion, the analysis would confuse conventional polysemy with poetic innovation. The distinctive semantic innovation lies in the construction *yurak* + *yulib tashlamoq* and in the context that turns an emotional center into an object of violent physical manipulation.

Silent crying in nature

Mirzo Kenjabek's *Jimjit yig'layotgan majnuntollarda* ("in the weeping willows crying silently") attributes human crying to trees. The participle *yig'layotgan* "crying" conventionally describes an animate subject capable of emotional or physiological tears. *Majnuntol* "weeping willow," by contrast, is a plant. The expression therefore transfers an affective human action to the natural environment.

The cognitive structure can be formulated as NATURE REPRESENTS HUMAN EMOTION. The adjective-like adverb *jimjit* "silently" is crucial because it specifies the kind of crying: the trees do not produce audible human sobs, but their visual form and movement are interpreted as silent suffering. The natural image becomes a representation of emotional restraint.

The semantic innovation is contextually intensified by the poem's broader theme of separation and punishment. Nature is not simply personified for aesthetic effect; it becomes a participant in the emotional scene. The reader can interpret the trees as an externalization of the speaker's unspoken grief. This demonstrates how semantic occasionality can function as a bridge between individual psychology and environmental imagery.

The grave in the heart: memory as physical space

The expression *Sening qalbingda/O'zimning... qarovsiz qolgan... qabrim bor!* ("In your heart I have my own neglected grave") presents a striking spatialization of memory and loss. *Qabr* "grave" conventionally denotes a physical burial place. *Qalb* "heart" may denote the anatomical organ, the emotional center, or the inner world of a person. Their combination produces an emergent structure in which the heart is conceptualized as a physical space containing a grave.

The central mapping in this passage is PSYCHOLOGICAL MEMORY IS PHYSICAL SPACE. The grave provides a highly structured source domain: it implies death, permanence, abandonment, silence, and the persistence of what is no longer alive. When this structure is projected into the heart, emotional

memory is represented as a materialized place that can contain a buried identity or relationship.

The word *qarovsiz* "neglected" intensifies the spatial model. A physical grave can be maintained or neglected; the same property is transferred to emotional memory. The expression therefore creates an emergent conceptual blend in which an inner psychological state acquires the properties of a physical site. The result is a highly individualized semantic configuration and a strong example of semantic occasional derivation.

Physical contact and emotional absence

The lines involving *Qo'llarim qo'lingga ketsa ham tegib...* and *Sen meni sezmaysan...* establish a contrast between physical contact and emotional non-contact. The hands may touch, yet the person does not "sense" the speaker. The ordinary physical frame of touch is therefore placed beside an emotional frame of recognition and absence.

The semantic innovation is produced through the tension between bodily contact and psychological distance. The verb *tegmoq* "touch" belongs to the physical domain, while *sezmoq* "sense, notice, perceive" can operate both physically and psychologically. The poem exploits this polysemy to construct an emotional paradox: bodily proximity does not guarantee emotional presence.

The conceptual model can be expressed as EMOTIONAL CONTACT IS PHYSICAL CONTACT, followed by its contextual negation: PHYSICAL CONTACT DOES NOT GUARANTEE EMOTIONAL CONTACT. The expression is especially effective because it activates a conventional bodily schema and then reverses the reader's expectation. This is an example of semantic innovation generated through constructional contrast rather than through the creation of a new lexical form.

A burning heart and living regret

In Mirzo Kenjabek's *Tirik o'kinchlardan yongan qalbim bor* ("I have a heart burning from living regrets"), the verb *yongan* "burning" belongs to the physical domain of heat and fire, while *qalb* "heart" activates the emotional domain. The phrase *tirik*

o'kinchlar "living regrets" further personifies regret and gives it continuing force.

Here the relevant mapping is EMOTIONAL INTENSITY IS PHYSICAL HEAT. Heat provides a scalar structure: increased temperature implies increased intensity, discomfort, and potentially destruction. The heart is therefore represented as a site of emotional combustion. The phrase *tirik o'kinchlar* adds a personified source of the heat, turning regret into an active force rather than a passive memory.

The example illustrates how multiple semantic innovations can interact within one construction. The physical predicate *yongan* maps onto emotional intensity, while *tirik* modifies an abstract noun in a way that attributes life-like agency to regret. The combined effect is stronger than either mapping alone. Such clustering is characteristic of poetic language, where several conceptual transfers may converge to create a single emergent emotional scene.

COMPARATIVE COGNITIVE ANALYSIS

The analyzed examples reveal a recurrent tendency to conceptualize abstract emotional and existential experience through concrete bodily, sensory, spatial, and natural domains. The patterns can be summarized in the following table.

Poetic expression	**Source domain**	**Target domain**	**Cognitive model**
Sevib bo'ldim Sizsiz o'limni	Love/ attachment	Death	DEATH IS AN OBJECT OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT
Tirik vujud bilan ko'tarmoq	Physical burden	Existential suffering	EMOTIONAL SUFFERING IS PHYSICAL BURDEN
Buloqdirsiz	Natural spring	Human character	NATURE REPRESENTS HUMAN EMOTION
Suvsab o'lsam	Thirst	Longing/ need	EMOTIONAL NEED IS PHYSICAL THIRST
Ishqqa o'xshab ketgan ta'mangiz	Taste	Emotional evaluation	EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE IS SENSORY TASTE
Yuragimni yulib tashlayman	Physical injury	Emotional pain	EMOTIONAL PAIN IS PHYSICAL INJURY
Yig'layotgan majnuntollar	Human crying	Nature	NATURE REPRESENTS HUMAN EMOTION

Qalbingda ... qabrim bor	Grave/ space	Memory/loss	PSYCHOLOGICAL MEMORY IS PHYSICAL SPACE
Qo'llarim ... tegib /Sen meni sezmaysan	Physical contact	Emotional recognition	EMOTIONAL CONTACT IS PHYSICAL CONTACT
Yongan qalbim	Heat/fire	Emotional intensity	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY IS PHYSICAL HEAT

The table shows that semantic occasional derivation in the analyzed poetry is strongly embodied. The source domains are not arbitrary. They involve experiences that are perceptually and physically accessible: carrying, thirst, taste, injury, touch, heat, spatial containment, and natural movement. These domains provide structured experiential frames for representing abstract states. This is compatible with cognitive-linguistic accounts in which embodied experience contributes to conceptual organization [3: 246-261; 4: 57-86; 5: 1-18; 8: 3-6; 10: 1-15].

A second pattern concerns emotional extremity. The selected expressions frequently occur where ordinary emotional description would be insufficient. Love becomes love of death; suffering becomes a physical load; longing becomes thirst; pain becomes bodily mutilation; memory becomes a grave; regret becomes a burning force. Semantic innovation therefore correlates with high affective intensity. The poet selects a concrete source domain whose experiential force is capable of carrying the intensity of the target emotion.

A third pattern concerns paradox and semantic incompatibility. Love normally presupposes a positive or desirable object, while death is culturally and semantically associated with cessation and loss. Touch normally presupposes contact, while the poem uses physical contact to emphasize psychological absence. A grave is normally outside the body, yet it is placed inside the heart. These incompatibilities are not errors; they are the mechanism through which the reader is forced to construct an emergent interpretation.

Another point that becomes visible in the examples is that semantic occasionality is often relational. A single lexical item may remain conventional while the larger construction becomes innovative. This is evident with *yurak* "heart," *ko'tarmoq*

"carry/bear," *tegmoq* "touch," and *sezmoq* "sense." Their dictionary meanings are not themselves new. The innovation emerges from their unusual combinations and the conceptual frames activated by the poem. This point supports construction-sensitive approaches to meaning [6: 1-24; 9: 1-20].

OCCASIONALITY, CONVENTIONALITY, AND CLASSIFICATION

One of the main analytical problems in the study of poetic language is distinguishing genuinely occasional meanings from conventional figurative language. If every metaphorical expression were classified as an occasionalism, the category would become too broad to provide explanatory value. The present study therefore proposes a three-level distinction.

First, formal occasional derivation involves a new or non-standard lexical form produced through morphological or other formal operations. Second, semantic occasional derivation involves an established lexical form that acquires a contextually specific semantic configuration. Third, conventional figurative usage involves a metaphorical or polysemous meaning that is already sufficiently established in the language community and can be interpreted without reconstructing an individual poetic innovation.

The distinction can be operationalized through four tests. The first is the dictionary test: does the relevant meaning correspond to an established lexical sense? The second is the contextuality test: does the interpretation depend strongly on the specific poem? The third is the incompatibility test: does the construction violate ordinary semantic selection in a way that forces reinterpretation? The fourth is the recoverability test: can the new meaning be explained through a coherent conceptual mapping rather than through arbitrary association?

The examples considered above generally satisfy the contextuality, incompatibility, and recoverability criteria. At the same time, some examples involve lexical senses that are already metaphorically available in Uzbek. This is not a contradiction. A conventional semantic potential can serve as the starting point for a new occasional configuration. The key question is whether the

poem develops a new relation among meanings rather than merely repeating a conventional figurative expression.

This approach is particularly important for corpus-based future research. If the researcher searches only for rare words, many semantic innovations will be missed because the lexical forms are ordinary. Conversely, if the researcher labels every metaphor an occasionalism, the dataset will be inflated. A reliable corpus methodology should therefore annotate lexical form, conventional sense, contextual sense, source domain, target domain, and degree of conventionality separately.

Poetic and Cognitive Functions of Semantic Innovation

The analyzed semantic innovations perform several functions simultaneously. The first is intensification. Physical burden, thirst, injury, heat, and burial provide high-intensity experiential frames that make abstract emotion perceptually vivid. Instead of stating that the speaker suffers greatly, the poem constructs a bodily scene in which the reader can imagine carrying death, dying of thirst, burning, or being physically torn.

The second function is compression. A successful poetic innovation can encode several semantic components in a short expression. The image of a grave in the heart simultaneously activates death, memory, abandonment, permanence, and emotional loss. Such compression is one reason why semantic innovation is central to poetic economy.

The third function is perspectivization. A conventional statement describes an emotional state from a socially shared conceptual frame, whereas an occasional expression presents the state through an individual perspective. “Loving death” does not merely communicate sadness; it constructs a particular relationship between the speaker and death. The reader must enter that conceptual perspective to understand the expression.

The fourth function is affective embodiment. By grounding emotion in physical experience, the poem allows readers to simulate the state through bodily schemas. Thirst, pressure, touch, heat, and injury are accessible because they are grounded in embodied experience. This does not mean that all readers will

experience exactly the same emotion; rather, the bodily source domain provides a cognitively available structure for interpretation.

The fifth function is ambiguity. Semantic occasionality often prevents the reader from reducing the expression to a single literal proposition. The ambiguity is productive because the expression simultaneously activates conventional and innovative meanings. The resulting semantic tension is a major component of poetic expressiveness.

Finally, semantic innovation contributes to the individuality of poetic style. Recurrent conceptual preferences – such as the use of bodily pain, natural imagery, spatial containment, or sensory experience – can become stylistic signatures. A broader corpus study could therefore investigate whether different Uzbek poets systematically prefer different source domains for emotional conceptualization.

DISCUSSION

Taken together, these examples support the view that poetic semantic creativity in which innovation is neither wholly arbitrary nor fully predictable from the lexicon. The poet works with conventional linguistic resources but reorganizes their conceptual relations. This position is compatible with cognitive approaches that treat meaning as dynamic, context-sensitive, and grounded in experiential knowledge [3: 6-17; 4: 57-86; 5: 1-18; 8: 3-6; 9: 1-20; 15: 21-36].

The study also refines the notion of derivation. In morphological theory, derivation normally implies formal change. In poetic semantics, however, a derivational relationship can be modeled at the level of meaning: an existing lexical representation serves as a base from which a contextually transformed interpretation is constructed. The term semantic derivation should therefore be used cautiously, with explicit criteria distinguishing it from polysemy, metaphor, and pragmatic enrichment.

The examples from Zebo Mirzo and Mirzo Kenjabek show that semantic occasionality often emerges through constructional pressure. In *Sevib bo‘ldim Sizsiz o‘limni*, the verb of love

restructures the interpretation of death. In *Yuragimni yulib tashlayman*, the violent predicate restructures the emotional reading of heart. In the grave image, the spatial noun restructures the conceptualization of memory. In each case, the innovation cannot be adequately explained by the lexical item in isolation.

This observation has implications for the study of Uzbek poetic language more broadly. Uzbek offers a rich inventory of bodily and sensory vocabulary that can participate in metaphorical and metonymic conceptualization. The language-specific study of such patterns can reveal how universal embodied schemas interact with culturally and poetically specific conceptualizations. The aim should not be to assume that every mapping is universal, but to determine which mappings are conventional, which are culturally salient, and which are individually constructed.

There are also clear limits to the material used here. The dataset is deliberately small and qualitative, and it focuses on selected examples rather than a representative corpus of all contemporary Uzbek poetry. The classification of occasionality also involves interpretation, especially when conventional metaphorical potential overlaps with poetic innovation. These limitations do not invalidate the analytical model; rather, they indicate the need for a larger corpus-based follow-up study with independent annotation and frequency measures.

A subsequent stage of this research could involve building a corpus of contemporary Uzbek poetry and annotate semantic innovations according to lexical category, source domain, target domain, grammatical construction, degree of conventionality, and cognitive model. Statistical analysis could then determine whether particular bodily or sensory domains are disproportionately productive in the conceptualization of specific emotions. Such a corpus would also allow comparison among poets, periods, and genres.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined semantic innovation in contemporary Uzbek poetry through the concept of semantic occasional

derivation. The examples examined here show that established lexical forms can acquire highly individualized meanings when placed in semantically unexpected poetic constructions. The resulting innovations are not equivalent to ordinary metaphor, because their interpretation depends on specific contextual restructuring and often creates an emergent conceptual configuration.

The examples from Zebo Mirzo and Mirzo Kenjabek reveal recurrent mappings between concrete experience and abstract emotion: suffering is conceptualized as a physical burden, longing as thirst, pain as injury, emotional experience as taste, memory as physical space, emotional intensity as heat, and human emotion through natural imagery. These mappings show the central role of embodied cognition in poetic meaning construction.

The study further argues that the most reliable unit of analysis is often the expression or construction rather than the isolated word. A lexical item may retain its conventional dictionary meaning while its combination with another lexical unit creates a new semantic relation. Consequently, the identification of semantic occasional derivation requires attention to lexical semantics, contextual selection, constructional structure, and cognitive mapping simultaneously.

The main contribution of this analysis is a set of analytical criteria for distinguishing semantic occasional derivation from formal occasional word formation and conventional figurative language. These criteria can support future corpus-based research on Uzbek poetic language and can be adapted to comparative studies of semantic creativity in other literary traditions.

Ultimately, semantic innovation in poetry demonstrates that linguistic creativity is not limited to the invention of new words. It also involves the invention of new relations among existing words, experiences, and conceptual domains. Contemporary Uzbek poetry provides a productive field for investigating how such relations are constructed, interpreted, and used to represent complex emotional experience.

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