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INVESTIGATION OF PHENOMENA RELATED TO THE UPPER AND LOWER SEMANTIC LEVELS OF THE LITERARY TEXT

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Abstract

This article explores the dual-layered semantic structure of literary texts, focusing on the relationship between explicit (upper-level) and implicit (lower-level) meanings within modern Uzbek linguistics. Drawing on the anthropocentric paradigm, the study analyzes how linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic factors shape textual interpretation. The research highlights that explicit meanings are realized through propositional, modal, and nominative structures, while implicit meanings—manifested through presupposition, secondary meaning, inference, and allusion—form the covert dimension of textual communication. The parallel operation of these layers constitutes a defining feature of artistic discourse, particularly evident in the Uzbek *askiya* genre. Through a system-structural and intertextual analysis, the study proposes a unified model for differentiating semantic levels and demonstrates how implicit meanings contribute to the aesthetic completeness and cognitive depth of literary texts.

Keywords: Semantic structure, explicit and implicit meaning, propositional structure, presupposition, secondary meaning, inference, allusion, anthropocentric linguistics, *askiya* genre, intertextuality.

Introduction

The emergence of anthropocentric approaches in linguistics has broadened the scope of semantic research, allowing scholars to examine meaning as a complex interaction between linguistic form, cognition, and communicative intention. Within this paradigm, the study of textual semantics has shifted from purely

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grammatical analysis toward a deeper understanding of the human cognitive and pragmatic mechanisms underlying language use.

In both traditional and modern linguistics, such terms as *meaning*, *concept*, *content*, and *notion* are used to describe the semantic dimension of language. However, when the text itself becomes the primary object of linguistic inquiry, the term *content* acquires a broader interpretive function. The semantic composition of literary texts, shaped by the author's mental and cultural worldview, reflects the duality of linguistic expression—*explicit* and *implicit*. This study seeks to analyze how these two semantic levels interact, forming the integral meaning of a text.

The central research problem concerns the implicative-pragmatic characteristics of texts—how hidden meanings, presuppositions, and associative layers of thought are constructed, and how they contribute to the aesthetic and cognitive integrity of discourse. Addressing these issues enables a better understanding of the mechanisms through which language conveys not only overt information but also nuanced, context-dependent meanings.

Literature Review

The idea that linguistic meaning operates on multiple levels has been extensively explored in world linguistics since the mid-20th century. Theories of surface and deep structures (Chomsky, 1965), explicit and implicit meaning (Grice, 1975), and semantic-pragmatic interaction (Leech, 1983; Sperber & Wilson, 1986) have influenced contemporary approaches to textual analysis. Cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, Langacker) and pragmalinguistics have emphasized that meaning arises not merely from linguistic forms but also from conceptual and cultural frameworks.

In Uzbek linguistics, the dual structure of meaning has been discussed by M. Hakimov, Sh. Safarov, and other scholars, who analyzed the relationship between semantic syntax, propositional structures, and implicative meanings. Their works introduced terms such as *presupposition*, *tagma'no* (secondary meaning), and *tagbilim* (background knowledge), linking them to the study of implicit communication. Nevertheless, as noted in previous studies, the lower semantic

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level—its typology, linguistic indicators, and cognitive mechanisms—remains insufficiently explored as an independent research domain.

This article builds upon these foundational studies, synthesizing insights from both global and Uzbek traditions to establish a coherent model for analyzing the implicit dimension of textual meaning, particularly within the aesthetic context of Uzbek literary discourse.

Method and Methodology

The research applies a system-structural, cognitive-pragmatic, and intertextual approach.

1. System-structural analysis is used to identify the correlation between linguistic form and semantic function, distinguishing between upper (explicit) and lower (implicit) levels of textual meaning.

2. Cognitive analysis examines how implicit meanings are derived from conceptual frameworks stored in the mental lexicon of speakers and readers.

3. Pragmatic analysis focuses on communicative intent and contextual realization—how implicit meanings emerge from speech situations and authorial strategies.

4. Intertextual analysis considers the ways in which presuppositions, allusions, and associative references create semantic coherence across texts and cultural contexts.

Data are drawn from Uzbek literary texts, with particular attention to the *askiya* genre, which exemplifies the dynamic interplay between explicit and implicit meanings in dialogue. The study employs qualitative linguistic interpretation, supported by comparative analysis of Uzbek and global theoretical perspectives.

Discussion

The findings confirm that the semantic structure of a literary text is inherently two-tiered:

- The upper semantic level corresponds to *explicit thought*, realized through verbal, propositional, modal, and nominative structures.

- The lower semantic level corresponds to *implicit thought*, conveyed through presupposition, secondary meaning, inference, and allusion.

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In literary discourse, particularly in *askiya*, communicants deliberately shift emphasis from the explicit to the implicit level, thereby altering the conventional order of communication. This dynamic interaction results in semantic layering, where overt meaning functions as the communicative surface, while covert meaning operates as the deeper cognitive and cultural substrate.

Furthermore, the research identifies that implicit structures are not always verbally expressed; they may remain non-verbal yet cognitively present, perceived through contextual, cultural, and intertextual cues. The integration of implicit knowledge into the text's semantic architecture contributes to interpretive richness, inviting multiple readings and enabling aesthetic plurality.

The main part

The emergence of new anthropocentric theories in linguistics has provided opportunities to approach the research object and its content from various perspectives. In linguistic science, a number of terms related to meaning and semantic structure are used both in traditional and modern linguistics, and these terms have been accepted by the scientific community as standardized categories. Among the terms pertaining to the semantic structure of language are *meaning*, *concept*, *notion*, and *content*. However, at times there arises a need to determine which linguistic level the terms *meaning* and *content* belong to, or to distinguish between their use in relation to the thematic scope of linguistic research. Specifically, when the text is considered the object of linguistic study, the use of the term *content* becomes more appropriate. Therefore, in this study, when addressing the implicative-pragmatic features of the text, special attention is paid to how the totality of ideas within the text forms its semantic structure.

According to linguistic literature, "the field of ideas in a literary text consists of a two-tiered semantic structure: explicit (surface) and implicit (deep) levels of thought" [1, p.15]. It is well known that the content of a literary text is formed on the basis of thought. The ideas that constitute the semantic composition of a literary text are grouped according to their form of expression. The content, which emerges from the ideas within the literary text, can be classified into two levels according to the characteristics of expression: the upper semantic level and the lower semantic level (the term *semantic level* is attributed to M. Hakimov). The

upper semantic level is characterized by the explicit expression of thought. Therefore, this level, formed through the author's explicit ideas, is referred to as the upper semantic level. The lower semantic level, on the other hand, contains ideas that possess implicative features, i.e., meanings that are conveyed indirectly or through contextual cues. These implicit ideas can be divided into several groups according to their internal properties. The material belonging to the upper semantic level of the text's semantic structure is expressed through verbal means. These constitute the core content of a sentence or text and are identified as propositional structures. One of their key and dominant characteristics is that they are explicitly expressed through linguistic (verbal) forms. For this reason, they are regarded as the material representations of thought. In Uzbek linguistics, within the field of semantic syntax, the initial emphasis has traditionally been placed on the verbal means of expression belonging to the syntactic level of language. However, the study of implicit semantic layers – those that lie beneath the surface meaning and reveal the deeper cognitive and pragmatic dimensions of the text – represents an important new direction within the anthropocentric paradigm of modern linguistics.

Prior to the establishment of pragmalinguistics as a new direction in linguistics, the internal structuring of the meaning of a sentence or text had not been systematically discussed. Consequently, issues concerning explicitly and implicitly expressed ideas, knowledge, and meanings within the semantic structure of a text remain relevant to this day. In particular, phenomena associated with the comprehension of implicative structures of language—such as *presupposition*, *secondary meaning (tagma'no)*, *inference*, and *allusion*—which are the results of processes of perception, interpretation, and association, have not been thoroughly investigated as independent monographic research objects. The emergence of concepts such as semantic syntax, syntactic semantics, semantic syntax of content, and poetic syntax, along with the development of related terms and interpretations, can be traced back to the 1980s. In the scholarly literature of that period, one can observe initial attempts to conceptualize and categorize the semantic layers of sentences and texts, as well as efforts to classify and name them. For instance, the following classifications and terminological distinctions were introduced: *"surface and deep structures"* [2], *"literal, explicit, intended,*

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and implied meanings" [3], *"explicit and implicit"* [4], *"hidden meanings expressed through linguistic means or lying behind linguistic forms"* [5], and *"intentional, non-intentional, and conventional meanings"* [6]. These terms, which pertain to the semantic level of sentences and texts, have since become part of the linguistic terminological apparatus denoting explicit and implicit expressions of thought. Their adoption contributed to the refinement and theoretical advancement of pragmalinguistics, a field grounded in the anthropocentric paradigm. Moreover, the growing use of these terms, together with the conceptual frameworks associated with them, has intensified scholarly interest in exploring the nature of phenomena belonging to the implicative structure of language, thereby establishing a new dimension in the study of meaning, interpretation, and human cognition within modern linguistic theory.

 In world linguistics, terminological units describing the two-level division of the semantic structure of a sentence or text—namely, explicit and implicit levels—are widely employed. In Uzbek linguistics, however, such classifications are often represented through terms that refer specifically to phenomena related only to the implicit (hidden) part of meaning. Among these are terminological expressions such as *logical meanings in the structure of the sentence or text*, *presupposition*, *background knowledge* (*tagbilim*) [7; 8; 9; 10], *secondary meaning* (*tagma'no*) [11], and *the modal system of language* [12]. These terms indicate that ideas regarding the differentiation of semantic levels are present in the Uzbek linguistic tradition as well.

In fact, the twofold division of the semantic level of a sentence or text into explicit and implicit components also finds expression within the study of modality. From the perspective of the category of modality, the semantic structure of a sentence or text is divided into objective and subjective modalities. Logically, objective modality corresponds to the propositional structure, while other semantic structures represent subjective modality. Therefore, although discussions of upper and lower semantic levels had begun relatively early in Uzbek linguistics, phenomena pertaining to the lower semantic level—their terminology, general and distinctive features—had not yet been systematically examined as immanent characteristics of the text.

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Once the text came to be regarded as an independent object of linguistic research, it began to be analyzed from multiple perspectives. As noted in the literature, *"syntactic semantics is developing as a branch of syntactic theory that studies the meaning structure of sentences and texts"* [8, p.42]. In analyzing the immanent properties of the text, special attention has been devoted to the correlation between its form and content. From this standpoint, the system-structural approach to the study of sentences and texts has demonstrated the necessity of component analysis of textual elements.

It has been established that the semantic structure of the text, consisting of the division of ideas into two groups, includes explicitly expressed ideas corresponding to upper semantic levels, realized through verbal means and forming the propositional structure. Simultaneously, ideas belonging to the lower semantic level possess implicative characteristics and differ from one another according to their expressive mechanisms. These observations have underscored the need for deeper investigation of hidden meanings as integral to the overall semantic system of the text.

Expressions contributing to the explicit articulation of meaning or to the refinement and enrichment of textual semantics were thus referred to as manifestations of upper and lower semantic levels respectively. The study of explicitness and implicitness gained momentum with the formation of pragmalinguistics, a discipline focusing on the interpretation of hidden meanings and communicative intent. In this sense, early discussions of explicit and implicit expression in Uzbek linguistics can be seen as initial attempts to explore the nature of thought representation in discourse.

As research on explicit and implicit expression advanced, interest in examining the essence and typology of these phenomena intensified. Indeed, the semantic structure of literary texts is a complex phenomenon that necessitates considering the cognitive structures associated with the formation of thought within mental linguistics (mentalinguistics). The materialization of mentally conceived thoughts through linguistic means gives rise to the semantic structure of sentences and texts, thus highlighting the growing importance of semantic syntax as a research area.

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Scholars have begun to differentiate between lower and deep semantic levels, each possessing unique features that distinguish them from one another. As noted, *"the structure of any sentence (or text) is complex and multi-layered—including syntactic, semantic, and other structures—and its semantic structure itself consists of several components: propositional, modal, and communicative"* [8, p.42].

According to Sh. Safarov and several other pragmalinguists, the semantic content of a text encompasses denotative and significative properties, which include elements such as proposition, reference, explicature, inference, implicature, relevance, and presupposition [13, p.118]. In their classification, phenomena belonging to both the upper and lower semantic levels are presented in a general framework—without differentiation. For instance, propositional structure and reference (related to nomination theory) pertain to the upper level, while explicature and inference occupy intermediate or lower positions within the semantic hierarchy.

Acknowledging that these earlier studies provided a sound theoretical basis for understanding the general composition of textual meaning, our research continues this line of inquiry by focusing on the differentiation of semantic structures based on intertextual markers and the systematic investigation of phenomena belonging to the lower semantic level. The primary objective is to clarify existing interpretive inconsistencies and establish a coherent framework for analyzing the implicit dimension of textual meaning within the modern Uzbek linguistic paradigm

It is evident that the ideas belonging to the upper and lower semantic levels together constitute the overall meaning of a text. These two types of ideas are distinguished based on a single criterion—the manner of their expression. The first type represents ideas expressed explicitly, referred to by the term "explicit thought." The second type encompasses ideas expressed implicitly, which, in linguistic studies, are identified as the **"implicative structure."** The implicit realization of ideas pertaining to the lower semantic level manifests through such phenomena as presupposition, secondary meaning (tagma'no), inference, and allusion. The hidden expression of thought emerging from these phenomena within the lower semantic system is termed "implicit thought." Although the

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implicit structure of language, in general terms, refers to the concealed expression of thought, it manifests in several distinct forms, each differing from the others in its linguistic realization, cognitive basis, and communicative function.

The semantic structure of a literary text likewise consists of two components – the upper and lower semantic levels.

At the upper semantic level, there is a clear tendency toward explicit expression, which is realized through traditional grammatical categories, including well-established theories concerning the propositional, modal, and nominative structures of language. In contrast, the expression of ideas associated with the lower semantic level is linked to implicit categories. Within the process of artistic communication, both the author and other participants in communication not only express some of their ideas openly, but also embed certain meanings covertly into the semantic fabric of the text. Some of these hidden ideas may be revealed through linguistic indicators, while in other cases, implicit thoughts and knowledge may lack any verbal means of realization.

Therefore, such concealed thoughts are regarded as non-verbal in nature, and are characterized by the absence of direct linguistic expression – they cannot be articulated explicitly through linguistic means.

In the askiya genre (the traditional Uzbek form of witty dialogue and verbal contest), thoughts are expressed through both of these modes – explicit and implicit. Participants in such communicative exchanges rely on the theory of actual sentence division, emphasizing and foregrounding specific meanings that they wish to convey to the audience. As a result, the usual order of communication is altered: the propositional structure of the language recedes into the background, while the implicit thought intended by the author or speaker becomes foregrounded.

Within the structure of the text or utterance, implicit thoughts belonging to the lower semantic level come to replace the explicit propositional content. The parallel use of upper and lower semantic levels—and the shifting dominance of one over the other—constitute a distinctive aesthetic category of artistry that is particularly characteristic of the askiya genre. Accordingly, it can be emphasized that the semantic content of a literary text is formed based on the author's mental activity and conceptual worldview.

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Rooted in the conceptual picture of the world, the author's cognitive framework allows them to depict reality through linguistic and artistic imagery, expressing certain elements implicitly and others explicitly.

The completeness and integrity of a literary text are achieved precisely through the interplay between the hidden and the manifest semantic layers.

The hidden semantic structure of a text is composed of such phenomena as presupposition**,** secondary meaning (tagma'no)**,** inference**,** and allusion. These phenomena, belonging to the lower semantic level, interact through the category of intertextuality, thereby forming the integrated overall semantic structure of the literary text.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the upper and lower semantic levels collectively constitute the comprehensive meaning of a literary text. The distinction between explicit and implicit expression is not merely linguistic but also cognitive and pragmatic, reflecting the author's worldview and communicative intention.

Implicit meanings, realized through mechanisms such as presupposition, *tagma'no*, inference, and allusion, are integral to understanding the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of discourse. Their interplay with explicit structures forms a unified semantic system that embodies the artistic, cognitive, and communicative completeness of the text.

By situating the phenomenon of implicitness within the anthropocentric framework, this research enriches the theoretical foundations of modern Uzbek linguistics, offering methodological tools for the analysis of textual meaning and contributing to the broader field of cognitive-pragmatic linguistics.

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