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The Role of The "Passion" Concept in The Language Conceptosphere

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Abstract: The development of linguistic pragmatics and the concept of the speech act has significantly influenced modern linguistic and philosophical thought, revealing how language functions not only to convey information but also to perform actions within specific social contexts. Within this framework, the study of culturally embedded concepts such as "passion" (nafs) becomes essential, as it represents a key element in the linguocultural and conceptual worldview of a speech community, particularly in Islamic and Eastern traditions. Despite the significance of the concept of "nafs" in both religious and literary texts, its role within the language conceptosphere remains underexplored, especially in terms of how it operates as a pragmatic and philosophical concept in linguistic structures. This article investigates the linguistic and conceptual dimensions of "passion," exploring its semantic field, cultural representation, and interpretative significance within Uzbek and broader Islamic discourses. The analysis highlights how the concept of "nafs" integrates spiritual, ethical, and social meanings and is portrayed across proverbs, Sufi interpretations, and classical poetry (e.g., Navoi), reflecting a layered understanding of human behavior and inner struggle. By linking the speech act theory with indigenous conceptual constructs, the study offers a unique perspective on how abstract moral categories function within culturally loaded linguistic expressions. Understanding the role of such concepts enhances cross-cultural pragmatics and deepens our appreciation of how language reflects and shapes moral consciousness, thereby supporting interdisciplinary inquiry into linguistics, philosophy, and theology.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Concept, Concept of "Passion", Conceptosphere

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1. Introduction

The concept of "passion," or nafs, holds a profound place in the intersection of linguistics, philosophy, religion, and cultural studies, especially within the context of Eastern thought and the Uzbek linguistic worldview[1]. As the field of pragmatics has evolved—particularly since the mid-20th century through the development of speech act theory by philosophers like J. Austin and J. Searle—attention has shifted toward the functional, action-oriented nature of language in human life. Within this paradigm, the concept of nafs emerges not merely as a lexical item but as a deep conceptual and cultural construct that influences speech behavior, ethical discourse, and personal identity[2]. In the Uzbek language, nafs embodies a wide semantic field—ranging from soul and self to greed, desire, and moral struggle—and finds vivid expression in folklore, classical poetry, and Sufi thought. Despite its rich presence in literature and religious doctrine, the linguistic and pragmatic dimensions of nafs remain underexplored in modern conceptual studies[3]. This article aims to examine the role of "passion" within the Uzbek conceptosphere by analyzing its meanings, speech-act functions, and interpretive layers in cultural and literary discourse. By integrating perspectives from linguistics, theology, and

literary analysis, the research sheds light on how this concept shapes communication and reflects the ethical struggles within the human psyche. Through this lens, *nafs* serves as a bridge between linguistic meaning and philosophical introspection, illustrating the complexity of human communication shaped by cultural and spiritual values[4].

2. Materials and Methods

The methodology of this study is based on descriptive, conceptual, and comparative linguistic analysis, integrating elements of pragmatic theory and cultural linguistics. The investigation draws on the speech act theory of J.L. Austin and J.R. Searle, emphasizing the performative nature of language and its ability to convey not only meaning but also social and psychological functions. The concept of “*nafs*” (passion) is examined through its linguistic representations, cultural semantics, and philosophical underpinnings within both classical and contemporary Uzbek discourse[5]. The research employs textual analysis of historical sources including ghazals by Alisher Navoi and Sufi treatises, alongside proverbs, hadiths, and scholarly interpretations from Eastern and Western literary traditions. By analyzing these texts, the study identifies how “*nafs*” is expressed, conceptualized, and morally framed within Uzbek linguistic culture. The meanings are evaluated through semantic decomposition and pragmatic categorization of utterances where “*nafs*” is invoked, including metaphorical and idiomatic structures. In doing so, the research captures both the spiritual dimensions and the sociocultural functions of “*nafs*” as a component of the Uzbek conceptosphere. Comparative examples from world literature, such as the works of Dante and Pushkin, further contextualize the concept across cultures. Ultimately, this interdisciplinary approach enables the study to trace the evolution of the passion concept through language and analyze its embeddedness in ethical, religious, and communicative practices[6].

3. Results and Discussion

The development of pragmatics in the second half of the 20th century is associated with the formation of the theory of the speech act as a full-fledged linguo-philosophical doctrine[7]. The concept of the speech act existed in earlier periods in the teachings of such scientists as W. Humboldt, S. Balli, K. Buhler, E. Benveniste, M. Bakhtin, but the theory of the speech act as a complete doctrine was formed in the works of the English logician J. Austin, the American psychologist J. Searle and others. Philosophers working at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge drew attention to the multifunctionality of linguistic activity and its inseparability from the way a person lives[8].

One of the first to promote the idea of interpreting speech acts formed in the process of communication as separate linguistic units and classifying them by content was Professor John Austin of Oxford University. He raised this issue in his 1955 lectures at the traditional William James Readings at Harvard University. These lectures were later published in 1962 under the title *How To Do Things With Words*[9].

J. Austin draws attention to how confusion in the interpretation of the concepts of “sentence” and “judgment (confirmation)” used in philosophical logic and traditional grammar can lead to inconveniences and wrong conclusions. In the grammatical tradition, it is recognized that not every sentence is a sentence or an affirmation, and that there are also sentences that express questions, exclamations, wishes, or other types of content. However, philosophers do not always agree with linguists. Most of the sentences considered “judgmental affirmations” in grammars (we would like to warn you that the concepts of “judgmental affirmation” and “declarative sentence” in traditional grammar do not completely repeat each other - Sh.S.) do not express any affirmation of the events taking place or, as J. Austin writes, they are “not intended to inform, report or record events”. As a result, the Oxford philosophers prepared a kind of “innovation” in the analysis of the content of the sentence. According to J. Austin and his colleagues when each sentence is pronounced, in addition to expressing its meaning, a certain action is

performed, that is a message is given about an event, this message is confirmed or denied, something is requested, forbidden and an order, advice, permission is given, a promise or invitation is made and a request, gratitude is expressed[10].

In the explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language, “nafs” is an Arabic word that means heart, soul; person; goal, aspiration; pride, arrogance. Nafs is a passion for food and drink, material possessions, and worldly things, a sexual desire.

The concept of “nafs” is one of the concepts that promotes purity, not being attached to the world, being a believer, not giving in to lust, and abstaining from sin. Nafs is a person’s material self, “I”. A person who follows the path of nafs becomes its slave. Lust is considered one of the bad vices. We can cite many proverbs from folk folklore as examples[11]. “Mani nafsim balodur, yonar otga solodur”, “Nafsning yomni-baloning konyi”, “Mani nafsim balodur, O’tdan cho’qqa solodur” “My soul is a trouble, it is like a burning fire”, “The path of the soul is a mine of trouble”, “My soul is a trouble, it is like a fire to the peak” are proverbs such as such proverbs, spoken by those who cannot control their own desires are actually a bitter truth spoken by the people. Wise men divide the human desire into several levels. One of them is called “Nafsul-ammora”. Nafsul-ammora is the desire in the creation of man. This desire consists of eating, drinking and sleeping, but this state of the soul of man pushes him to various evils. The desire in the above proverbs is nafsul-ammora. Nafsul-ammora is the desire that directs a person to sensual acts [12].

In the 531st ghazal of Alisher Navoi’s collection called “Navodir ush-shabob”, an opinion is expressed about Nafsul-ammora:

Malak taslimi shayton kibridekdur buki, aql o’zin

Qilib ma’muri amr istar amorat nafsi ammora.

In our religion, purifying the ego, overcoming the ego and fighting the ego are considered extremely necessary and difficult tasks. The education of the ego is one of the most sensitive topics in folk literature, the Holy Quran, and hadiths, and many scholars, including Imam Bukhari, Al-Farabi, Al-Biruni, and Navoi, have presented instructive thoughts about the ego in their works. In order to control the ego, a person must stay close to those who educated the ego, learn knowledge, and act on it. Hazrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, said the following about the lightness of the reckoning on the Day of Judgment for a person who examines his ego:

حَاسِبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُحَاسَبُوا، وَتَزَيَّنُوا بِالْعَرَضِ الْأَكْبَرِ وَإِنَّمَا يَخْفُ الْجِسَابُ
وَمُ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى مَنْ حَاسَبَ نَفْسَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
(رواه الامام الترمذي)

That is: “Before you are called to account, take stock of your souls and prepare for the Day of Judgment [13]. The account on the Day of Judgment will be easy only for those who are self-examined in the world” (Narrated by Imam Tirmidhi).

Not only in Eastern literature, but also in Western literature, lust is condemned. For example, in the epic poem “The Divine Comedy”, the famous Italian poet Dante Alighieri condemns lustful and insatiable eaters to hell. The Russian poet A.S. Pushkin describes the consequences of lust in the fairy tale “The Golden Fish”. In it, a greedy old woman who cannot control her lust ends up with a cracked bowl due to lust. For example, as stated in authentic hadiths, “No one can corrupt religion as much as greed corrupts Islam” , “The worst of human qualities is extreme greed and extreme cowardice” , “The harm of two hungry wolves released into a herd is not equal to the harm that a person’s greed for wealth and prestige causes to his religion”. According to Eastern thinkers, greedy officials destabilize society and doom themselves and their kingdom to destruction. Sahl ibn Abdullah Tustari (d. 896) was one of the first Sufis to pay special attention to the issue of “passion” in the teachings of Sufism . According to the interpretation of Sufism, the passion is an important part of human existence and therefore is considered by Sufis to be

the root of all evil and the source of sins. The basis for the views of Sufis on the self was the hadith of our Prophet, "He who knows his passion, knows his Lord" . According to Ghazali, the self is the root of trouble, the source of disgrace [14]. According to Najmuddin Kubro, "the passion is an immortal serpent" , and Mahmud Asad Jo'shan confesses, "the passion is the material desire of man, the "I".

Shortly, in the ghazals of A. Navoi about the self, along with the norms that are taken as the basis for the journey, there is a wide discussion about the upbringing of murids and saliks and their achievement of their goal [15].

4. Conclusion

The study of the concept of "passion" (nafs) within the linguistic and cultural context of the Uzbek language reveals a profound integration of philosophical, religious, and folkloric dimensions. The exploration of nafs as a key element in the language conceptosphere highlights its role not merely as a lexical item, but as a carrier of moral, emotional, and spiritual values deeply embedded in human consciousness and speech behavior. Drawing from classical thinkers, Sufi teachings, proverbs, and literary works such as those of Alisher Navoi, the article demonstrates that nafs functions as a conceptual and pragmatic tool for expressing inner conflict, self-restraint, and moral reasoning. Its multifaceted nature allows it to serve as both an individual ethical guide and a collective cultural marker. The correlation of speech act theory with the interpretation of nafs enriches the understanding of how linguistic units convey more than surface meaning — they reflect societal norms and personal struggles. By linking this concept to Western literary figures and Islamic hadiths, the article illustrates a universal moral dialogue on the dangers of unrestrained desire and the pursuit of spiritual purity. The linguistic treatment of nafs thus contributes to a deeper grasp of how language encodes psychological and ethical dimensions, reinforcing the importance of pragmatic and conceptual semantics in modern linguistic studies. Ultimately, understanding nafs within the language conceptosphere offers valuable insight into the intersection of language, thought, and cultural identity, demonstrating that words are not merely communicative tools but reflections of the human condition.

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