

**THE CONCEPTUAL FORMATION OF MEANING IN LITERARY TEXTS:
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Abstract: *This article explores the conceptual formation of meaning in literary texts through cognitive and pragmalinguistic approaches. It examines how readers mentally construct meaning based on conceptual frameworks, cultural background, and linguistic cues. The study highlights the interaction between cognitive mechanisms-such as conceptual metaphors, frames, mental models, background knowledge-and pragmatic factors, including author intention, speech acts, context, implicature, and reader interpretation. The article concludes that meaning in literary texts emerges through a dynamic interplay of cognition, language, and context, enabling readers to conceptualize and evaluate the author’s artistic message.*

Keywords: *cognitive linguistics, pragmalinguistics, literary text, conceptualization, context, mental model, interpretation.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqola badiiy matnlarda ma’no hosil bo’lish jarayonini kognitiv va pragmalingvistik yondashuvlar orqali tahlil qiladi. Unda o’quvchilar konseptual tuzilmalar, madaniy zamin va lingvistik ko’rsatkichlar asosida ma’noni qanday ruhiy tarzda shakllantirishi o’rganiladi. Tadqiqotda konseptual metaforalar, freymlar, mental modelllar, fon bilimlari kabi kognitiv mexanizmlar hamda muallif niyati, nutq aktlari, kontekst, implikatura va o’quvchi talqini kabi pragmatik omillar o’zaro qanday aloqaga kirishishi yoritilgan. Maqola xulosasiga ko’ra, badiiy matnlardagi ma’no kognitsiya, til va kontekstning dinamik o’zaro ta’siri orqali yuzaga keladi; bu esa o’quvchiga muallifning badiiy g’oyasini konseptual tarzda anglash va baholash imkonini beradi.*

Kalit so’zlar: *kognitiv lingvistika, pragmalingvistik, badiiy matn, konseptuallashtirish, kontekst, mental model, talqin.*

Аннотация: *В данной статье рассматривается концептуальное формирование смысла художественного текста с позиций когнитивного и прагмалингвистического подходов. Анализируется, как читатель выстраивает смысл на основе концептуальных структур, культурного опыта и языковых маркеров. Особое внимание уделяется взаимодействию когнитивных механизмов -концептуальной*

метафоры, фрейма, ментальной модели, фона знаний - и прагматических факторов: авторского замысла, речевых актов, контекста, имплицатуры и интерпретации читателя. Делается вывод, что смысл художественного текста формируется через динамическое взаимодействие мышления, языка и контекста.

Ключевые слова: когнитивная лингвистика, прагмалингвистика, художественный текст, концептуализация, контекст, ментальная модель, интерпретация.

Introduction

The interpretation of literary meaning has long been a central concern of linguistic, literary, and philosophical studies. In contemporary research, the formation of meaning in literary texts is increasingly approached through an interdisciplinary lens, combining insights from cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, psychology, and literary theory. Literary texts differ from ordinary discourse in that they convey multilayered semantic depth, symbolic imagery, cultural values, and aesthetic intentions. Therefore, uncovering how meaning is conceptualized within literary discourse requires an examination of both mental cognitive processes and pragmatic communicative strategies.

From a cognitive perspective, meaning is not inherent in linguistic forms alone; rather, it is constructed in the reader's mind through conceptual systems, mental imagery, background knowledge, and cultural experience. Cognitive linguistics argues that literary language activates conceptual metaphors, frames, and mental models, which shape how readers interpret characters, events, and themes. In contrast, the pragmalinguistic approach focuses on the communicative nature of the literary text, emphasizing authorial intention, context, speech acts, and implicit meaning. It studies how writers encode messages and how readers decode them through contextual inference, presupposition, and interpretive competence.

In this regard, literary meaning is a dynamic and interactive phenomenon that emerges through the interplay between the author, the text, and the reader. While the author employs linguistic and stylistic devices to express artistic intention, the reader reconstructs meaning by engaging cognitive and pragmatic mechanisms. Thus, to fully understand the semantics of literary discourse, it is essential to integrate both cognitive and pragmalinguistic approaches.

This introduction sets the foundation for a comprehensive analysis of how literary meaning is formed conceptually, how readers mentally process and interpret artistic messages, and how pragmatic factors shape communicative outcomes in literature. The following sections explore the theoretical foundations, cognitive mechanisms,

pragmalinguistic features, and the mutual relationship between cognition and pragmatics in the formation of literary meaning. The cognitive approach focuses on mental processes and conceptual structures that shape the interpretation of literary discourse, whereas the pragmalinguistic approach emphasizes the communicative intent of the author, context, and the pragmatic effects on readers. Together, they provide a holistic understanding of how literary meaning is constructed, perceived, and interpreted.

Conceptual Meaning and Literature: Theoretical Background

The concept of meaning in literary texts extends beyond lexical semantics. A literary text encodes conceptual, cultural, emotional, and philosophical meaning through artistic language.

According to cognitive linguistics, meaning is not stored in words themselves but is constructed in the mind of the reader, based on conceptual knowledge and experience.

Three core theoretical foundations shape conceptual meaning in literature:

1. Meaning as a Mental Construct: Meaning emerges through mental representation and conceptual integration.
2. Language as a Medium of Conceptualization: Linguistic forms activate cognitive frames and schemas.
3. Reader as a Co-Creator of Meaning: Interpretation varies depending on background knowledge, worldview, and cultural experience.

Thus, meaning is dynamic, subjective, and context-dependent.

Cognitive Approach to Meaning in Literary Texts

The cognitive approach examines how readers conceptualize literary meaning through mental processes. Key cognitive mechanisms include:

1. Conceptual Metaphor and Symbolism

Literary texts often rely on metaphors to conceptualize abstract ideas (e.g., “life as a journey,” “time as a river”). Metaphors activate conceptual domains that allow readers to interpret deeper symbolic meaning.

2. Frames and Cultural Scripts

Readers interpret events based on cognitive frames—structured background knowledge associated with certain situations (e.g., “wedding frame,” “war frame”). Cultural scripts influence interpretation through shared cultural experience and values.

3. Mental Models and Imagination

While reading, individuals construct mental models, visualizing characters, settings, and events. This enables emotional engagement and imaginative reconstruction of the narrative world.

4. Intertextual and Background Knowledge

Cognitive interpretation also relies on prior literary knowledge, genre awareness, and intertextual links to other texts, myths, or cultural narratives.

Pragmalinguistic Approach to Literary Meaning

Pragmalinguistics focuses on literary communication as an intentional act. It studies how authors encode meaning and how readers infer meaning based on context and pragmatic cues.

1. Authorial Intent and Communicative Strategy

The author designs language intentionally to evoke emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic responses. Literary devices serve as strategies to shape interpretation.

2. Speech Acts and Literary Discourse

In literature, speech acts extend beyond literal function. For example, a character's promise or confession may symbolize moral values, fate, or narrative transformation.

3. Context and Implicature

Context determines how meaning is derived. Pragmatic meaning includes implicit messages and hidden implications that are not directly stated but must be inferred.

4. Reader's Interpretive Role

Meaning emerges in interaction: the author implies, and the reader interprets. Pragmatic meaning depends on the reader's ability to decode presuppositions, irony, and subtext.

Interaction of Cognitive and Pragmatic Factors in Meaning Formation

The conceptualization of literary meaning is a synergistic process where cognition and pragmatics mutually reinforce each other:

Cognitive Component Pragmatic Component Result in Literature

Mental imagery Authorial intention Artistic visualization

Conceptual metaphors Implicit meaning Symbolic interpretation

Cultural frames Contextual inference Context-sensitive meaning

Background knowledge Speech acts Reader-text interaction

Thus, meaning is neither purely cognitive nor purely pragmatic; it is integrative, multilayered, and dynamic.

Conclusion

The conceptual formation of meaning in literary texts is a complex and multifaceted process shaped by the interaction of cognitive and pragmalinguistic factors. As demonstrated in this study, literary meaning does not reside solely in linguistic units, nor is it limited to the author's artistic intention. Rather, it emerges through the dynamic and interpretive engagement between the text and the reader. Cognitive mechanisms—such as conceptual metaphors, mental models, frames, and background knowledge—enable the reader to construct and visualize the literary world, infer symbolic layers, and connect

textual information with personal and cultural experience. At the same time, pragmalinguistic elements—including communicative intent, context, speech acts, presupposition, and implicature—shape the ways in which meaning is communicated, implied, and interpreted.

Integrating cognitive and pragmalinguistic perspectives enriches literary analysis by highlighting that meaning is not static but negotiated. The author encodes artistic messages through stylistic, metaphorical, and contextual devices, while the reader actively reconstructs and re-evaluates them based on cognitive competencies and pragmatic awareness. This interaction transforms the literary text into a communicative and conceptual space where thought, language, imagination, and socio-cultural factors converge.

Therefore, examining literary texts through both cognitive and pragmalinguistic approaches provides a deeper understanding of how readers conceptualize and interpret artistic meaning. It also offers valuable insights into the universal and culture-specific mechanisms of literary communication. Ultimately, the fusion of these approaches contributes to a more holistic comprehension of literature as a cognitive-pragmatic phenomenon, reaffirming that meaning in literary discourse is co-created and continuously shaped by the interplay between language, cognition, and context.

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