

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Role of Tropes in Uzbek Literary Compliments: Based on Ulug'bek Hamdam's Novel "Muvozanat"

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## Abstract

The article analyzes the semantic and pragmatic functions of tropes in literary compliments in Ulugbek Hamdam's novel *Muvozanat*. The study examines 18 examples of compliments selected from the novel using semantic-pragmatic, contextual, and comparative methods. The results show that tropes such as metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, simile, and epithet enhance the emotional and expressive impact of compliments, while their selection depends on the social context of communication. The findings may be used in studies of stylistics, linguopoetics, pragmatics, and speech etiquette.

## KEYWORDS

Trope, compliment, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, simile, epithet, pragmatic analysis, literary text, *Muvozanat*.

## INTRODUCTION

Literary works are among the richest and most reliable sources for the linguistic study of speech etiquette. When depicting communication between characters, writers rely on authentic examples of everyday speech and, in this way, reflect the subtle features of Uzbek communicative culture in literary texts. Complimenting, as one of the important types of communicative acts, is distinguished within the dialogic structure of a literary text by its specific linguistic and pragmatic nature.

A compliment is an expressive speech act based on the speaker's positive evaluation of the addressee's personal qualities, behaviour, appearance, or possessions (J. R. Searle, 1969). A distinctive feature of compliments in Uzbek literary texts is the active use of tropes, that is, figurative devices formed through the transfer of a word from its primary meaning to a figurative one. Through metaphors, metonymies, hyperboles, similes, and epithets, a compliment develops from a simple expression of praise into an

emotionally rich speech act that embodies cultural values.

Ulugbek Hamdam's novel *Muvozanat* presents a profound psychological depiction of Uzbek intellectual life, family relationships, friendship, and romantic communication. The dialogues between Yusuf and Zahro, the formal and social interaction between Muhammadjon aka and Odiljon aka, as well as the scenes depicting communication between hosts and guests, reveal various layers of Uzbek communicative culture in a natural and authentic manner. Therefore, the novel serves as a valuable scholarly source for studying the relationship between tropes and compliments.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The foundations of trope theory can be traced back to classical rhetoric. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines metaphor as "the transfer of the name of one thing to another" and distinguishes its linguistic and aesthetic dimensions [1, p. 57]. In *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian interprets a trope as "the

artistic transfer of a word from its proper meaning to another meaning”; this definition continues to retain its methodological significance for contemporary semantic analysis [2, p. 301].

In modern stylistics, V. V. Vinogradov classifies tropes as a group of devices based on lexical-semantic transfer and distinguishes their aesthetic and communicative functions in literary discourse [3, p. 87]. I. R. Galperin, in turn, identifies tropes as a separate category within the classification of stylistic devices and substantiates their emotional and evaluative functions in communication [4, p. 138].

In cognitive linguistics, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, in *Metaphors We Live By*, define metaphor as a central mechanism in the human system of conceptualising the world. According to their conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor is not merely a literary device but also a cognitive model that shapes everyday human thought: one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another, and this transfer occupies a central place in the structure of thinking [5, p. 3]. N. D. Arutyunova examines metaphor from a discursive perspective and emphasises its role in expressing the speaker’s communicative intention [6, p. 56].

In Uzbek linguistics, H. Boltaboyev studies the linguopoetics of literary texts and demonstrates the role of stylistic devices in textual semantics [7, p. 145]. F. Musayeva analyses figurative expressions in Uzbek literary discourse and identifies their connection with the national culture of communication [8, p. 78]. N. Karimova investigates the cultural and pragmatic features of Uzbek compliments, whereas E. Sadikov studies the compliment as a speech act in Uzbek and English from a methodological perspective [9, p. 115; 10, p. 18]. However, none of these studies provides a systematic, table-based analysis of the role of tropes in the structure of compliments using authentic literary texts as research material.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study employed the semantic-pragmatic method of analysis. This method involves examining each example of a trope at three levels: (1) the semantic level, which identifies the mechanism of semantic transfer and the layers of meaning activated in the expression; (2) the pragmatic level, which determines the communicative function performed by the trope within the context of a compliment; and (3) the contextual level, which examines the influence of the type of social relationship—family, friendship, romantic, or formal—and the gender factor.

Ulugbek Hamdam’s novel *Muvozanat* (Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi, 2007, 251 pages) was selected as the primary source. The text of the novel was read in full, and examples of compliments were identified through purposive sampling. The selection criteria were as follows: (a) the speech unit had to perform the communicative function of a compliment by positively evaluating the addressee; (b) the mechanism of the trope had to be clearly identifiable; and (c) the context of communication had to be evident from the text. A total of 18 examples of compliments were collected and analysed.

The results of the analysis are presented in four tables: (1) a general classification of trope types; (2) models of semantic transfer; (3) speech-pragmatic effects; and (4) the relationship between social context and trope selection.

**DISCUSSION**

As a result of analysing 18 examples of compliments collected from the novel, five main types of tropes were identified. The following table presents their classification, linguistic definitions, and authentic examples from the novel.

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Type of trope</b> | <b>Linguistic definition</b>  | <b>Authentic example from the novel</b>  | <b>Page</b> |
|------------|----------------------|---|--|-------------|
| <b>1</b>   | Somatic metaphor     | Expressing abstract emotions and personal qualities through parts of the human body | “My heart felt relieved” — Zahro referring to Yusuf’s visit                                    | 82          |
| <b>2</b>   | Natural metaphor     | Praising a person’s qualities through natural phenomena                             | “You affect me like a breeze blowing from the world to which I once belonged” — Zahro to Yusuf | 88          |
| <b>3</b>   | Quantitative         | Expressing a numerical  | “Although you may have   | 86          |

|    |                         |   |   |     |
|----|-------------------------|---|---|-----|
|    | hyperbole               | quantity in an exaggerated form   | been told this a thousand, a million times, I still want to repeat it” — Yusuf to Zahro                             |     |
| 4  | Qualitative hyperbole   | Intensifying the degree of a quality or effect without limit                        | “My head reached the sky” — Odiljon aka to Muhammadjon aka  | 20  |
| 5  | Metonymy (PART → WHOLE) | Praising the whole person and their activity through a part of the body             | “What magical words could console his wonderful, eloquent, wise, and kind uncle?” — Yusuf about his uncle           | 23  |
| 6  | Implicit comparison     | Equating an object with a positive concept without an explicit marker of comparison | “Although they were trying to show how precious they were to each other” — Yusuf and Zahro                          | 78  |
| 7  | Epithet + metaphor      | Combining an evaluative adjective with a metaphor                                   | “Her brightly blazing dress intensified her feminine charm” — about Zahro   | 85  |
| 8  | Universal hyperbole     | Referring to the whole world or humanity in an exaggerated manner                   | “It seems that devoted people like him have become fewer in recent times” — the host speaking about Muhammadjon aka | 203 |
| 9  | Traditional epithet     | A figurative adjective derived from the traditional Uzbek literary system           | “A beautiful woman” — Yusuf describing Zahro  | 85  |
| 10 | Metonymy + epithet      | Combining a body part with an evaluative adjective in a metonymic transfer          | “Feeling her labour-worn yet pleasant fingers on his shoulders” — about his mother                                  | 210 |

Table 1. Classification of trope types in compliments in the novel *Muvozanat*

The hyperboles and metaphors presented in the table are among the most actively used tropes in Uzbek literary compliments. An important feature is that tropes often function not separately but in combination, that is, synergistically. In Example 7, the epithet and metaphor reinforce each other, while in Example 10, metonymy and epithet operate together.

Each type of trope has its own direction of semantic transfer. The following table presents the main models of semantic transfer identified in Uzbek literary compliments, the corresponding conceptual formulas based on Lakoff's theory, and authentic examples from the novel.

| Model of semantic transfer   | Conceptual formula based on Lakoff | Source domain                        | Target domain            | Example from the novel           |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Physical sensation → Emotion | [EMOTION = PHYSICAL STATE]         | Expansion of the heart or inner self | Joy and emotional relief | “My heart felt relieved” (p. 82) |
| Nature →                     | [HUMAN                             | Breeze as a                          | Yusuf's spiritual        | “You affect me                   |

|                                     |                                  |   |  |   |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Human influence</b>              | INFLUENCE = NATURAL FORCE]       | natural phenomenon                      | influence                              | like a breeze" (p. 88)                                |
| <b>Number → Degree of sincerity</b> | [SINCERITY = QUANTITY]           | A million times                         | Unlimited sincerity                    | "A thousand, a million times" (p. 86)                 |
| <b>Upward movement → Happiness</b>  | [HAPPINESS = UPWARDNESS]         | The head reaching the sky               | Boundless gratitude                    | "My head reached the sky" (p. 20)                     |
| <b>Body part → Whole person</b>     | [PART = WHOLE] metonymy          | Fingers as a body part                  | The mother's entire life and affection | "Her labour-worn fingers" (p. 210)                    |
| <b>Burning → Attractiveness</b>     | [ATTRACTIVENESS = FIRE]          | A dress blazing like fire               | The intensity of Zahro's charm         | "Her brightly blazing dress" (p. 85)                  |
| <b>Rarity → Uniqueness</b>          | [A PERSON = A UNIQUE PHENOMENON] | The decreasing number of devoted people | Muhammadjon aka's uniqueness           | "People as devoted as him have become fewer" (p. 203) |

Table 2. Models of semantic transfer in Uzbek compliments

As Table 2 demonstrates, semantic transfers in Uzbek literary compliments occur in several major directions. Somatic and spatial models, such as "the expansion of the heart" and "the head reaching the sky," confirm the tendency of the Uzbek cognitive system to express emotions through the human body and spatial movement. Natural models involving fire and breeze reflect the traditional analogy established between nature and human beings within the Uzbek cultural and

aesthetic system.

Each type of trope produces a particular speech-pragmatic effect within the context of a compliment. This effect is directly related to the speaker's communicative intention, the degree of influence intended for the addressee, and the type of social relationship. The following table systematically presents the types of tropes and their speech-pragmatic effects.

| Type of trope          | Primary pragmatic effect                                | Secondary effect                                       | Communicative strategy               | Example from the novel                       |
|------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Somatik metafora       | Presenting emotion as real and perceptible              | Demonstrating the speaker's sincerity                  | Persuasion through physical evidence | "My heart felt relieved" – Zahro (p. 82)     |
| Natural metaphor       | Elevating the addressee as a natural force or necessity | Giving poetic elevation to communication               | Aesthetic glorification              | "Like a breeze" – Zahro (p. 88)              |
| Quantitative hyperbole | Presenting praise as universal                          | Demonstrating unlimited attention toward the addressee | Intensified affirmation              | A thousand, a million times" — Yusuf (p. 86) |
| Qualitative hyperbole  | Raising gratitude or evaluation to                      | Acknowledging social                                   | Restoring social balance             | "My head reached the                         |

|                    |   |  |                            |  |
|--------------------|---|--|----------------------------|--|
|                    | an absolute degree  | indebtedness                                       |                            | sky” — Odiljon (p. 20)                               |
| Metonymy           | Praising a person through a specific and observable activity  | Providing factual grounds for praise               | Evidence-based praise      | «“A wonderful orator and a wise man” — Yusuf (p. 23) |
| Epithet            | Enriching a quality with aesthetic and evaluative meaning     | Assigning poetic value to the addressee            | Aesthetic evaluation       | “A beautiful woman” — Yusuf (p. 85)                  |
| Epithet + metaphor | Doubling the emotional and aesthetic impact of the compliment | Creating an implicit poetic effect within the text | Multilayered glorification | “Her brightly blazing dress” — Yusuf (p. 85)         |

**Table 3. Speech-pragmatic effects of trope types**

Hyperbolic compliments serve two principal communicative strategies: intensified affirmation and the restoration of social balance. This confirms that hyperbole is perceived as a marker of sincerity in Uzbek communicative culture. Somatic metaphor, in turn, relies on the strategy of persuasion through physical evidence and presents praise as an emotional experience.

The most significant examples from the novel are analysed separately below.

**Example 1 – Zahro to Yusuf (p. 82): Somatic metaphor and indirect compliment**

“Actually, there was no need for you to become involved in these matters, but I am glad that you came; talking to you has made me feel much better” [11, p. 82].

The linguistic structure of this compliment is distinctive. It consists of two syntactic parts. The first part, “there was no need,” functions as a mitigating hedge, while the second contains an indirect compliment. The expression “my heart felt relieved” is a classical example of somatic metaphor. In Uzbek, ko’ngil represents the inner spiritual world, emotions, and mood as a metaphorical container, whereas the verb yozilmoq denotes a transition from a narrow and constrained state to an open and free one. Thus, the conceptual metaphor

[EMOTIONAL RELIEF = EXPANSION OF THE INNER SELF] is activated, and the positive influence of Yusuf’s visit on Zahro’s emotional state is expressed through physical sensation. Pragmatically, this indirect compliment has a stronger effect than direct praise because the speaker does not merely describe her feelings but presents their physical consequence. This provides the praise with emotional authenticity and credibility.

**Example 2 – Zahro to Yusuf (pp. 87-88): A complex compliment expressed through natural metaphor**

“At this moment, you affect me like a breeze blowing from that world to which I once belonged but which now lives only in my memories and dreams” [11, p. 88].

This compliment is one of the most complex figurative speech acts in the novel Muvozanat. Its structure consists of three semantic layers: (1) the layer of nostalgia, represented by “the world to which I once belonged but which now exists only in memories and dreams”; (2) the metaphorical layer, represented by the image of a breeze; and (3) the layer of influence, expressed by the phrase “you affect me.” Within the Uzbek cultural system, a breeze symbolises renewal, warmth, springtime change, and hope. Yusuf is therefore presented as a natural force embodying all these positive connotations. Furthermore, the use of the present continuous form in “you

are affecting me” indicates that the influence is not momentary but ongoing. This compliment is not merely praise of beauty or intelligence; it elevates Yusuf to the status of an essential element in Zahro’s spiritual life.

**Example 3 – Yusuf to Zahro (p. 86): Quantitative hyperbole and direct compliment**

“Although you may have been told this a thousand, a million times, I still want to repeat it... You are extremely beautiful!” [11, p. 86].

Hyperbole operates at two levels in this compliment. At the first level, the quantitative hyperbole “a thousand, a million times” emphasises that the praise has already been expressed repeatedly. It conveys the meaning that the speaker is not alone in holding this opinion and that everyone shares the same view. This gives the praise the effect of universal confirmation. At the second level, the intensifier “extremely” is combined with the evaluative expression “beautiful.” In Uzbek, this intensifier functions as a principal marker of emotional emphasis and raises the quality from an ordinary evaluation to an exceptionally high degree. Within Uzbek communicative culture, such exaggerated praise is interpreted not as falsehood but as a speech norm expressing the fullness and intensity of the speaker’s feelings.

**Example 4 – Odiljon aka to Muhammadjon aka (p. 20): A hyperbolic compliment in a formal-social context**

“For the kindness you have shown to my son Yusuf, Muhammadjon aka, I thank you a thousand times... The care you have shown has made my head reach the sky” [11, p. 20].

This compliment occurs in a formal-social context and is based on the Uzbek cultural formula of acknowledging social indebtedness. The expression “a thousand thanks” is a quantitative hyperbole conveying boundless gratitude. The expression “my head reached the sky” is a conventional phraseological hyperbole in Uzbek based on the conceptual

model [HAPPINESS = SPATIAL UPWARDNESS]. This model is widespread in Uzbek and broader Turkic cognitive systems: positive emotions are conceptualised as upward movement, whereas negative emotions are associated with downward movement. Pragmatically, the compliment serves the strategy of restoring social balance. The kindness shown by an older and socially respected person is formally acknowledged through sincere hyperbole.

**Example 5 – About the host Muhammadjon aka (p. 203): An implicit metonymic compliment**

“Your late uncle was a very good man. He worked tirelessly to make Marhamat what it is today. As I often say, devoted people like him seem to have become fewer in recent times” [11, p. 203].

This example illustrates a complex form of indirect compliment in Uzbek communication. Its structure consists of three parts: (1) direct evaluation – “he was a very good man”; (2) metonymic glorification – “he worked tirelessly,” where physical labour represents the person’s entire life and activity; and (3) hyperbolic uniqueness – “devoted people like him have become fewer.” The expression “to shed sweat” is an example of metonymy based on the Uzbek cultural code. Sweat symbolises labour, devotion, and honesty; therefore, the act of shedding sweat represents an individual’s entire life of service and activity. The phrase “have become fewer” relies on hyperbolic comparison to establish the person’s uniqueness. Together, these three components create a strategy of evidence-based praise: the evaluation is not presented without justification but is supported by specific activities and the person’s social contribution.

The examples of compliments in the novel *Muvozanat* occur in various types of social relationships, including romantic, friendly, familial, and formal contexts. These contexts directly influence the choice and intensity of tropes.

| Social context          | Participants in communication | Dominant trope                          | Degree of intensity | Example from the novel |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| Romantic communication  | Yusuf → Zahro                 | Quantitative hyperbole + direct epithet | High, emotional     | p. 86                  |
| Intellectual friendship | Zahro → Yusuf                 | Natural metaphor + implicit comparison  | Medium to high,     | p. 88                  |

|                                  |                            |  |                            |        |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------|
|                                  |                            |  | philosophical              |        |
| Indirect intimate communication  | Zahro → Yusuf              | Indirect somatic metaphor                | Medium, delicate           | p. 82  |
| Formal-social communication      | Odiljon → uhammadjon aka   | Qualitative + quantitative hyperbole     | High, ceremonial           | p. 20  |
| Implicit expression of respect   | Yusuf's internal monologue | Metonymy + chain of epithets             | Medium, profound           | p. 23  |
| Attitude toward ancestral memory | Host → Yusuf               | Hyperbole + metonymy of devotion         | Medium to high, respectful | p. 203 |
| Family memory scene              | Authorial description      | Epithet + metonymy concerning the mother | High, warm and emotional   | p. 210 |

**Table 4. The relationship between social context and trope selection**

The selection of tropes in Uzbek literary compliments is directly related to the social context. Hyperbole is highly intensive in romantic and formal communication, whereas metaphor and metonymy prevail in indirect communication. This demonstrates that, in Uzbek communicative culture, not only what is said but also how it is expressed is equally important; in other words, form carries significance comparable to that of content.

**RESULTS**

A comprehensive analysis of 18 examples of compliments selected from the dialogues in the novel *Muvozanat*, based on four analytical tables, led to the following scholarly conclusions.

First result. Five main types of tropes are actively used in Uzbek literary compliments: metaphor, including somatic and natural metaphors; metonymy; hyperbole, including quantitative and qualitative forms; comparison; and epithet. These tropes often function synergistically: two or more tropes may be activated simultaneously within a single example, thereby reinforcing one another's semantic and pragmatic effects. In the expression "her brightly blazing dress," epithet and metaphor operate together, while in the phrase "a wonderful orator, a wise and kind uncle," a chain of epithets and metonymy function simultaneously.

Second result. Each type of trope in Uzbek compliments is based on a specific model of semantic transfer. Somatic models, represented by the formulas [EMOTION = PHYSICAL STATE] and [HAPPINESS = UPWARDNESS], reveal a major feature of the Uzbek cognitive system: emotions are conceptualised through the human body and spatial movement. Natural models operate through such phenomena as breeze and fire, demonstrating the tradition of establishing analogies between human beings and nature within the Uzbek cultural and aesthetic system.

Third result. Different types of tropes serve various speech-pragmatic strategies in the context of compliments. Somatic metaphor is associated with the strategy of "persuasion through physical evidence," hyperbole with the strategies of "intensified affirmation" and "restoration of social balance," and metonymy with the strategy of "evidence-based praise." These strategies reflect the tendency of Uzbek communicative culture to attach greater importance not only to what is said but also to how it is expressed.

Fourth result. The choice of trope is directly related to the social context. Hyperbole is highly intensive in romantic and formal communication; natural metaphor and implicit comparison prevail in intellectual friendship; while epithet and metonymy become the principal figurative devices in family-related and memory-based scenes. This indicates that the

selection of tropes in Uzbek compliments is not accidental but represents a cultural norm corresponding to the type of social relationship.

Fifth result. At least one trope was identified in each of the 18 analysed examples. This makes it possible to regard tropes not as occasional decorative elements of Uzbek literary compliments but as one of their principal linguistic norms. Direct evaluation without figurative devices is therefore an atypical feature of compliments in Uzbek literary texts.

### CONCLUSION

Based on authentic examples of compliments taken directly from the dialogues in Ulugbek Hamdam's novel "Muvozanat", this study has made it possible to draw several important scholarly conclusions regarding the semantic structure, linguistic mechanisms, and speech-pragmatic functions of tropes within compliments in Uzbek literary texts.

From a theoretical perspective, Aristotle's classical definition of tropes, Quintilian's rhetorical classification, the stylistic approaches of Vinogradov and Galperin, Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, and Arutyunova's discourse analysis together provided a multidimensional methodological framework for examining Uzbek compliments. The studies of Boltaboyev, Musayeva, Karimova, and Sadikov in Uzbek linguistics also served as important methodological foundations for analysing the national material.

From an empirical perspective, the comprehensive analysis conducted through four analytical tables demonstrated that five types of tropes function synergistically in Uzbek literary compliments; each trope is based on a specific model of semantic transfer; the choice of trope is directly related to the social context; and tropes constitute an important linguistic norm of Uzbek compliments.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that, within Uzbek linguistics, the types of tropes used in compliments were comprehensively analysed on the basis of authentic literary material, namely the dialogues from the novel "Muvozanat", through four analytical tables. In addition, the relationship between tropes and social context was systematically demonstrated.

The practical significance of the study is that its findings may be applied in courses on Uzbek stylistics, linguopoetics, cognitive semantics, and speech etiquette, as well as in research on intercultural communication and translation

studies. Future research may further develop this field by comparatively examining compliments in "Muvozanat" and English literary texts and by applying corpus-linguistic methods.

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