

Stylistic And Pragmatic Study Of Litotes In English And Uzbek Languages

Ozodaxon Avazxon qizi Karimova

Teacher of World Language department, Kokand University

01516067@gmail.com

+998905092645

ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning a foreign language becoming vitally important, since knowing the language is knowing people. With this reason, many scholars and researchers are trying to investigate some similarities and differences between languages. The purpose of this article is to study litotes in both English and Uzbek languages. Litotes is a linguistic device that involves the use of negation to express an idea in a double negative or understatement. This study aims to analyze the use of litotes in English and Uzbek languages from linguapragmatic and linguological perspectives. Moreover, this article analyzes the use of litotes in both languages, examining its functions and subtypes. The findings suggest that while there are similarities between the two languages, there are also significant differences in how litotes is used and perceived. In order to reveal unities and diversities, some methods such as observation and comparison are utilized. Linguistically, the study found that litotes operates differently in each language. In English, litotes often involves the use of double negatives to express an affirmation, while in Uzbek, however, litotes often involves understatement without double negatives. Some example given in this article is taken from literature, prose and poetry to identify it.

Key words: *linguapragmatics, litotes, negation, tafrit, understatement, literature*

INTRODUCTION

Language is the heart of a nation, it is changing and it is a phenomenon in constant motion. Language change during the speech process, in application, it appears as a pragmatic possibility. Studying and researching the language tools of a work of art, language resources, including is closely related to studying the writers' style. One of such image tools is litota, not only used in poetry, but also, it is widely used in prose, written works, in oral speech works as well.

In linguistics, there are different explanations of the term "litotes". In accordance with I.V. Arnold, litotes depends on the expressiveness of negation and includes in the use of a particle with an antonym that already consists a negative prefix. For example: It is not unlikely = It is very likely; he was not unaware of = he was quite aware of.¹

According to V.A. Kukharenko, a two-component structure in which two negations are united to give a positive meaning is litotes. So, "not unkindly" actually means "kindly", though the positive impact is weakened and some lack of the speaker's reliance in his statement is implied. The initial part of a litotes is often come with "not" (the negative particle), while the second, often negative in meaning, differs in form from a negatively affixed word such as "unkindly", to a negative phrase. V.A. Kukharenko identified that the function of litotes is very suitable to the function of a stylistic means of understatement, because they both weaken the effect of the utterance. The one difference of the litotes lies in its special "double negation" as well as in the weakening of only a positive assessment.²

Moreover, in his works, Y.M. Skrebnev, litotes is a specific type of meiosis that implies a dependent trope and proves one notion by refuting another. As a result, we have a double negation:

¹ Arnold I.V., Stylistics. Modern English. Textbook for universities / 10th edition M.: Flint: Science, 2010, - P. 236.

² Kukharenko V.A., A Book of Practice in Stylistics. – Вінниця: «Нова книга», 2003. – P.38

not without his support / with his assistance, which generates a positive value but has a lower degree of intensity.³ According to E.V. Klyuev, litotes is a figure of speech that contrasts hyperbole and is conventionally referred to as a "understatement" - there are cases in which a "large value" is changed by a "smaller one" either intentionally, with a certain figurative aim or unconsciously following the speech tradition like "Look for a minute!"⁴

Current days, special attention has been paid not only to the structure of language, but also to the study of the internal form of words in the language by linguistics, for instance, semantics. Some spheres like linguapragmatics, linguology are being developed rapidly, and the trends in the complex study of literary texts are being improved.

J. Lyons, at the 12th International Congress of Linguists (Vienna, 1977), tried to explain and identify the subject of linguapragmatics: "Pragmatics expresses the usage of suitable linguistic units in communication in order to inspire the listener to receive the transmitted information as the speaker wishes. This pragmatics is about identifying the role of linguistic tools in interpersonal communication".⁵

Furthermore, the science that studies the way of pragmatics and the work related to this term, is called pragmalinguistics in linguistics, as well as this science is interpreted as follows: "Pragmalinguistics is the study of the use of language, the theory illustrating speech acts, the theory of conversational (oral) analysis, the science of the language system activated in the speech situation (context) and the study of linguistic means of interpersonal relationships".

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, some methods such as comparative method and analyzing data, observation are used. Observation is used for collecting data related to the theme as well as observe and analyze other scholars' and scientists' works. The reason of usage the method comparison is to find similarities and differences of litotes in both English and Uzbek languages.

Litotes

In Cambridge online dictionary "litotes" means the use of a negative statement in order to emphasize a positive meaning, for instance, "a not inconsiderable amount of money (= a considerable amount of money)".⁶

Litotes is a form of figures of speech which negates a positive in order to convey to comprehend irony. Litotes gives colorful meaning to the text. The stylistic device, "litotes" serves to downplay the size and importance of someone or something in literature. The usage of litotes dates back to historical periods. Classical examples of the technique are found in the "Iliad" by ancient Greek poet Homer, in which Zeus describes Achilles as saying, "He is not foolish and invisible," which has the meaning that he is both "wise as well as intelligent". Previous literary, lithotypes of ancient Rome are found in Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses* (1st century): "not once," which means "more than once." Some common words are removed from the litota: "none" is taken as "several", "not always" or "sometimes"

Firstly, the term "litotes" was used and it was given in a letter from an ancient Roman philosopher Cicero, who used this phrase for the simplicity of life. Over time, the meaning of the word has evolved into a lower-level thought that shows the principle of hesitation over "simplicity". Most parts of religious books, for instance, Biblical phrases are also based on litotes, for example: "My word ... is not repeated in vain"⁷, meaning that the word is meaningful. Litotes is used in poetry and prose for coloring meaning of the text, its expressiveness, imagery, euphonic speech and others, as well as it emphasizes basic concepts of the text. Types of denial in the literature - discrimination or mitigation - are determined by context, in speech - by intonation and emphasis. For instance,

³ Скребнев, Ю.М., Очерк теории стилистики / Ю.М. Скребнев. – Горький, 1975. – P. 120.

⁴ Klyuev E.V., *Rhetoric. Invention. Disposition. Elocution.* M., 2001. P. 58

⁵ Safarov Sh., *Pragmalinguistics.* Tashkent: National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, 2008. - 68-76 pages.

⁶ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/litotes>

⁷ <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Isaiah%2055%3A11>

relying on context or pronunciation, the word “not bad” can mean ways to both soften and soften. The method of litotes in literal discourse was used also by some great Russian poets, writers as well as scholars like N.V.Gogol, A.S.Griboyedov, A.S.Pushkin, N.A.Nekrasov and many others.

Lingua-pragmatics

Pragmalinguistics is one of the rapidly flourishing field in linguistics. Researchers interpret pragmalinguistics in diverse ways. In accordance with Y.D. Apresyan, pragmatics is a speaker’s perspective to:

- 1) truth to identity;
- 2) content to the message;
- 3) speaker’s attitude to the addressee by means of language units (affixes, lexims, grammar, syntactic structure).

In general, according to the definitions given in scientific literatures linguapragmatics can be arranged as follows:

- 1) priority of human factors;
- 2) definitions depended on functional aspects in linguopragmatic researches, and contextual conditions: “Science about the use of a language” and “science about a language in a context”;
- 3) definitions, where much attention is paid to the effective interactions between communicants while speaking; the language in relation to relationships affect each to focus on the study of the efficiency;
- 4) definitions where interpretative aspect of speaking is considered separately in any communicative context. Here, interpretation refers to pragmatic significance of a sentence.⁸

Moreover, lingua-pragmatics is a branch of linguistic researches, which considers the use and interaction of language units in exact communicative pragmatic areas as an object. If there is a close interaction between a speaker and a listener, the venue of the speech act, time, its goals and expected results are also considered to be important.

The main task of the lingua-pragmatics to investigate the language in terms of lingua-pragmatic role. Namely, language is considered to be as a tool which influences on people’s minds and behavior. In particular, much attention is paid to the factors where a speaker identifies and chooses the best options to send his communicative intention as well as situations which influence on understanding communicative aim of a sentence. Such complexities form the subject of pragma-linguistics. To conclude, we may consider lingua-pragmatics as a branch which regulates human behavior.⁹

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Litotes are very common nearly in all languages that are used to emphasize a point by stating a negative to further affirm a positiveness of a concept or meaning. However, the interpretation of negation may depend on context, including cultural context. Therefore, it is important to research this stylistic device linguologically, linguoculturologically and linguopragmatically. Litotes which was originally comes from the Greek word “litotes” means “simple, small”; “tafrit” is also used in Uzbek language as the opposite of exaggeration, and is the art of depicting an object, event, detail in a work of art several times smaller. The more a thing, an event is depicted, reduced, weakened, weakened, compared to it, the depicted thing, the event looks huge and majestic. For this reason, litotes is often used together with exaggeration in formal cases in Uzbek language like official documents, academic writing and literature, while in English it is widely utilized in informal contexts, for example, in social media posts and conversations. Let’s focus on this verse by Khorazmiy which is seen in Uzbek literature:

*Bo’ying sarvu sanobardek, beling qil,
qilgan kishilarga vafo qil.*

Vafo

⁸ Apresyan Y. D., Pragmatic information for the explanatory dictionary //Pragmatics and problems of intensionality. – The Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR – Moscow.: IVAN USSR. – 1988. – P. 7-44.

⁹ Esenova K., Pragmalinguistic studies in linguistics. – 2017. P. 38-42.

In the verse, while describing the height of the sweetheart, in order to exaggerate her size, her height - her beauty (pine), he makes her waist very thin. It is very interesting that two opposing stylistic tools are studied side by side. Because the whole universe is consisted of opposites. Litotes and hyperbola are the same, and it is worth paying attention to the fact that they complement each other in addition to their contradictory meanings. Hyperbola is derived from the Greek word "hyperbole", which means to exaggerate. The term "litotes" is used in classical literature as the art of "tafrit" in Uzbek linguistics and literature.

An example for litotes is as the following:
sanamkim suv yaqosinda paridek o 'lturur,
bila yutsa bo' iur. (Atoiy)¹⁰

Ul
G'oyati nozuklugidin suv

In English linguistics, Litotes is a figure of speech used to express an affirmative by denying its opposite. It requires the use of a negative word and an understatement in which a sentiment is expressed ironically through negating contradiction. For example, saying "It's not the best weather" during a storm or hurricane could be an example of litotes, implying by ironic understatement which the weather is, actually, real weather is horrible.

Unlike Uzbek, in English language has three subtypes of litotes. They are:

A. Contradictory litotes (negation and negation): I am not sure that it is not the most suitable one.¹¹

In the sense of contradictory as "mutually opposed" the above classic examples contradictory litotes show that in this type of negation (given in example) is in the form of a negator, such as not, no, or nor;

B. Contrary litotes (negation and antonym of a lexeme): Kennedy is not idiot.

C. In the sense of contrary as "conflicting or antagonistic", contrary litotes can implicate negatively balanced words from various parts of speech, but, as Hoffmann points out, adjectives have a main role in forming and creating this subtype of litotes.¹²

D. Relative litotes (negation and correlation/metonymy): The class was in chaos, but it was not the students' fault.

In the sense of "mutually defining antonyms", this hypothetical example is of the reciprocal or correlative subtype. Here, student is opposite to teacher; additionally, Fahnestock¹³ mentions that other such pairs, including cause and effect, parent and child, doctor and patient and others – lexical opposites in terms of reciprocal determination (for instance, the concept of parent is impossible without the concept of child).

In English, litotes has functions and according to Anh,¹⁴ seven functions of understatement are identified:

1. Showing politeness.
2. Emphasizing the enormity of a problem.
3. Avoiding hurting the hearer's feeling and making the hearer moody.
4. Criticizing someone subtly (people with higher rank and position in the society).
5. Being a subtle form of sarcasm.
6. Functioning as a metaphor.
7. Making the problems less serious.

Litotes	Function
...I'm not a saint," he said...	Showing politeness
He was not a bust made of marble...	Functioning as a metaphor

¹⁰ Sultonsaidova S., Sharipova O'., O'zbek tili stilistikasi. (o'quv qo'llanma) – Toshkent 2009. P.73

¹¹ http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/debates_917.asp

Hoffmann ¹² M.E., Negatio Contrarii: A Study of Latin Litotes, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1987. P. 83-85

¹³ Fahnestock J., Rhetorical Figures in Science, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999. P. 130

¹⁴ Ahn T. T., A study of understatements in editorials in English and Vietnamese newspapers: dis. – 2010. P.16

...but they are no less important.	Emphasizing the enormity of a problem
...there were no easy answers in front of that child.	Emphasizing the enormity of a problem
...It will not be easy...	Emphasizing the enormity of a problem
...We can do no less	Emphasizing the enormity of a problem

Litotes is deliberate understatement also to make a point of the given idea. In classical Greece and Rome, speakers recognized hyperbole and litotes as useful part of linguistics and they used a lot of this device in their speech and literal masterpieces. Litotes falls under the category of verbal irony which is a type of verbal irony. However, litotes requires the use of a negative statement to confirm its opposite idea. Litotes also equates to irony because it means extreme diminution. Litotes can be considered as an artistical concept. This method is utilized to discredit the actual dimensions of the object as well as the event under the consideration. When a term which confirms a particular characteristic of litotes is replaced by a word that denies that the feature. Moreover, the expression can be called a methodological cycle of special softening of a text's meaning. Litotes illustrates the significance or size of someone as well as something, the opposite of the hyperbola used to improve the visual-expressive features of speech, a rare artistic example in literature. Litotes is mostly seen in the usage of prose and poetry to show the events or characters in the art more accurately. In both English and Uzbek languages, there are various types of speech twists, phrases which permit to give any emotional color, to make it more or less bright. In these conditions, litotes occupies one of the last places. It is an intentional artistic discrimination that can be applied to a person or object, to the characteristics of a particular event or phenomenon. A litotes in both languages is an opposition of exaggeration for the properties of an object or some human ability. The path we are considering is formed by applying a two-sided negation in speech if it is to show the negative side of any one, e.g., not without reason. However, it is necessary to emphasize dignity, but not much to praise, then the litotic path is formed using negatively colored words, for example: not bad, without heat, and many other examples. Mostly, in literature and oral speech, such deviations are used to turn the rejection of something into morality.

Here we have found some litotes, which gives a positive meaning to the idea of negative thought. These litotes can be used in its correct meaning in Uzbek language too.

Litotes	Instead of saying	Litota	Shu so'zlardan ko'ra
"Not bad."	"Good."	"Yomon emas."	"Yaxshi"
"It's not my favorite..."	"I don't like it"	"Menga to'g'ri kelmadi"	"Menga yoqmaydi"
"Not too shabby!"	"Nice!"	"Juda xira emas"	"Yaxshi"
"Non trival."	"Very complicated."	"Sodda emas"	"Murakkab"
"It's not the cheapest..."	"It's somewhat expensive"	"Arzon emas"	"Qimmat"
"Not unlike..."	"Like..."	"O'xshamagan emas"	"O'xshagan"

"Not great!"	"Very lousy!"	"Ajoyib emas"	"Juda yomon"
"The weather isn't great."	"There's a tornado going on!"	"Ob havo zo'r emas"	"Tornado kelmoqda!"
"It's not a masterpiece."	"It's terrible."	"San'at asari emas"	"Yomon"
It is not so wonderful	It is awful	"Unchalik ajoyib emas"	"Rasvo"
I am not sure	I do not believe in	"Ishonchim komil emas"	"Men bunga ishonmayman"
I have another idea	I am not agree with you	"Menda boshqa fikr bor"	"Fikringizga qo'shilmayman"

CONCLUSION

Litotes is used in both languages as a rhetorical device to express politeness, irony, humor, or emphasize a point. In English, litotes is mostly used in informal contexts such as social media posts or conversations, while in Uzbek, it is commonly used in formal; contexts such as academic writing or official documents as well as in literature.

Additionally, litotes can be a form of both conversational and in some cases it can be used as verbal irony. It is a method of depicting the object of the image by deliberately reducing and weakening it, that is, it is a reduced exaggeration. In order to emphasize and exaggerate the importance of a harmonious thing or event, the artist portrays another thing or event in a smaller scale compared to its grandeur and power. The stylistic qualities of the litotes reflect not so much an intended understatement as an indication of the presence of negative qualities. Inconsiderable in their degree - the semantic effect produced by the use of double negation. Litotes is mostly used in various ways according to speakers' aim. Moreover, this article provides data about use of litotes as well as how it is used differently by people across languages.

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