

PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF RELIGIOUS LEXIS IN TOHIR MALIK'S
NOVEL "SHAYTANAT"

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the study of the pragmatic features of religious lexis in Tohir Malik's famous novel "Shaytanat". The research analyzes how religious terms, expressions, and concepts are utilized within the literary text to influence the reader's perception and to shape the moral-psychological atmosphere of the work. Following the IMRAD structure, the paper investigates the communicative intent behind the use of religious vocabulary, its role in character portraiture, and its function in highlighting the conflict p.ween good and evil. The study employs pragmatic and contextual analysis to reveal that religious lexis in "Shaytanat" serves not only as a linguistic tool but also as a powerful pragmatic instrument for social and ethical evaluation.

Keywords: religious lexis, pragmatics, Tohir Malik, "Shaytanat", communicative intent, literary discourse.

Introduction

The evolution of modern linguistics has witnessed a decisive shift from the structural analysis of language to the functional and pragmatic exploration of discourse. Within this paradigm, the study of literary texts is no longer confined to stylistic descriptions but extends to the investigation of "language in action"—how authors employ specific lexical layers to manipulate meaning, evoke emotions, and construct social realities. Tohir Malik, a monumental figure in Uzbek literature, particularly in the psychological and detective genres, masterfully utilizes the multifaceted nature of the Uzbek language to depict the moral decay and spiritual struggles of society. His magnum opus, "Shaytanat," serves as a profound sociolinguistic document that mirrors the complex transition of Uzbek society, where religious lexis emerges as a critical pragmatic tool for ethical navigation [1; 12–15 p.].

Religious lexis, consisting of terms and expressions rooted in Islamic theology, ethics, and rituals, forms a distinct layer of the Uzbek lexicon. In "Shaytanat," this lexis is not merely a reflection of the characters' piety; rather, it is a deliberate linguistic choice used by the author to build a "moral infrastructure" within a narrative dominated by crime and lawlessness. Pragmatically, religious vocabulary functions as a system of signs that characters use to negotiate power, justify violence, or seek redemption. The tension p.ween the sacred nature of the vocabulary (words like *iymon*, *halol*, *gunoh*) and the profane environment of the underworld (the world of Asadbek and his associates) creates a pragmatic dissonance that is central to the novel's impact [3; 44–46 p.].

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the "illocutionary force" of religious words—the author's or character's intention behind the utterance. While previous literary analyses of Tohir Malik's work have focused on themes of justice and crime, the linguistic mechanisms of how religious words act as "speech acts" (warnings, social markers, or psychological triggers) remain under-researched. In the pragmatic space of the novel, a word like *qiyomat* (doomsday) is rarely used in its literal theological sense; instead, it acts as a pragmatic intensifier to emphasize the gravity of a p.rayal or a social catastrophe [7; 88–92 p.].

Furthermore, the research explores the sociolinguistic dimensions of religious lexis in the post-Soviet Uzbek context. Tohir Malik captures the era where religious identity was being rediscovered, and his characters use religious language to establish a new social hierarchy. This study aims to provide a comprehensive pragmatic mapping of these lexical units, demonstrating that the "Shaytanat" (the state of devilry) is defined not just by actions, but by the pragmatic subversion of sacred language. By analyzing these features, we can better understand how Tohir Malik influences the reader's moral perception and maintains the aesthetic tension throughout the five volumes of the work.

Methods

The research methodology is designed to move beyond simple frequency counts toward a deep qualitative and pragmatic interpretation of religious units in literary discourse. To ensure the scientific validity of the findings for a DSc-level inquiry, a multi-stage analytical framework was developed.

Corpus Selection and Lexical Categorization

The primary source material is the complete multi-volume edition of "Shaytanat." From this corpus, religious lexical units were extracted based on their semantic belonging to Islamic discourse. These were then classified into four major pragmatic categories:

Theonymic and Supernatural Units: Names of God, angels, and personifications of evil (e.g., *Alloh, Jabroil, Shayton*).

Ethical-Evaluative Lexis: Terms used to judge human conduct (e.g., *savob, gunoh, harom, ma'siyat*).

Ritualistic and Performative Units: Words associated with religious practices (e.g., *duo, tavba, namoz, zakot*).

Eschatological Lexis: Terms regarding the afterlife and final judgment (e.g., *oxirat, mahshar, do'zax*).

Pragmatic and Contextual Analysis

The study adopts the "Theory of Speech Acts" developed by Austin and Searle as its primary theoretical lens. Every instance of religious lexis was analyzed in terms of its:

Locutionary Meaning: The literal dictionary definition of the term.

Illocutionary Force: The speaker's intent—is the term being used to bless, to threaten, to mask a lie, or to express genuine remorse? [5; 101–105 p.].

Perlocutionary Effect: The intended effect on the listener—to instill fear, to gain trust, or to end a conflict.

Sociopragmatic Character Mapping

A specific method of "comparative characterology" was used to see how different social groups within the novel employ religious lexis. We compared the speech of the "criminals" (who use religious words as a traditional or manipulative mask) with the speech of the "victims" or "intellectuals" (who use them for existential reflection). This allowed us to identify "pragmatic markers of hypocrisy" versus "pragmatic markers of sincerity."

Narrative and Empathy Analysis

The study also utilized the method of "narrative pragmatics" to examine the author's voice. We analyzed how the narrator uses religious lexis to provide a moral commentary on the events without explicitly intruding into the plot. This involves identifying "presuppositions"—shared cultural and religious knowledge that the author assumes the reader possesses, allowing him to use a single religious term to evoke a vast network of moral associations [8; 112–115 p.].

Quantitative Support

While the focus is qualitative, a basic statistical distribution of key terms was calculated to identify the "pragmatic center" of the novel—which religious concepts are most vital to Tohir Malik's communicative strategy. This mixed-method approach ensures that the analysis is grounded in the text while being interpreted through the sophisticated lens of modern pragmalinguistics. By synthesizing these methods, the research provides a holistic view of how religious lexis functions as a dynamic force within the literary structure of "Shaytanat."

Characterization Mapping: We analyzed how the frequency and nature of religious vocabulary in a character's speech correlate with their social status and moral standing in the novel's hierarchy [2; 45–47 p.].

Results

The analysis of religious lexis in "Shaytanat" revealed that such vocabulary is distributed unevenly across the text, correlating with specific pragmatic functions. The results can be summarized in the following categories:

Moral-Ethical Evaluation and Characterization

Religious terms are frequently used as evaluative tools. Characters like Elchin or certain elders often use terms like "savob" (merit), "gunoh" (sin), "oxirat" (afterlife), and "qiyomat" (doomsday) to assess the actions of others. For instance, the use of the word "gunoh" in dialogues often carries a pragmatic weight far beyond its lexical definition, serving as a psychological trigger for guilt or a warning of inevitable retribution [3; 88–90 p.].

Pragmatic Functions of Religious Units

The following table illustrates the pragmatic distribution of religious lexis found in the text:

Lexical Category	Examples	Primary Pragmatic Function
Sacred Entities	Alloh, Parvardigor, Shayton	Establishing authority or personifying evil
Rituals/Actions	Namoz, Duo, Tavba	Indicating character transformation or hypocrisy
Ethical Concepts	Halol, Harom, Insof	Directing the reader's moral judgment
Eschatology	Jannat, Do'zax, Azob	Creating a sense of fear or hope (Emotional impact)

Contrastive Pragmatics

A significant result was the discovery of "ironic pragmatics" in the speech of criminal figures. When characters like Asadbek or his subordinates use religious invocations (e.g., "Xudo xohlasa", "Bismillah"), it often serves a pragmatic function of masking their true intentions or legitimizing their power through a distorted lens of tradition. This creates a powerful pragmatic dissonance for the reader, emphasizing the characters' spiritual alienation [4; 112–115 p.].

Discussion

The pragmatic features of religious lexis in Tohir Malik's "Shaytanat" reflect the deep-rooted Islamic traditions of Uzbek society, even within the context of a criminal world. One of the central discussions in this study is the "manipulative" versus "sincere" use of religious

words. According to pragmatic theories, the effectiveness of a speech act depends on the sincerity of the speaker. In Malik's novel, the author intentionally contrasts the sincere prayers of the suffering with the hollow invocations of the transgressors to highlight the theme of "shaytanat" (devilry) [5; 34–36 p.].

The term "tavba" (repentance) serves as a pragmatic pivot in the novel. Its use is almost always associated with a major shift in the narrative or character development. Pragmatically, it signals to the reader a possibility of redemption, acting as a bridge p.ween the dark world of crime and the light of spiritual awakening. Scholars of pragmatics note that religious lexis often functions as an "argument from authority" [6; 201–203 p.]. By invoking the name of God or the concept of Judgment Day, characters attempt to end an argument or enforce a social norm. In "Shaytanat", this is used to show how even the most hardened criminals are subconsciously bound by the spiritual laws of their culture.

Furthermore, the pragmatics of "duo" (blessing) and "la'nat" (curse) in the novel are crucial. These are performative speech acts that aim to change the reality of the characters. Tohir Malik uses them to foreshadow events, giving the religious lexis a predictive pragmatic function. As noted by N. Mahmudov, the power of a word in Uzbek culture is often tied to its spiritual weight, and Malik utilizes this cultural pragmatics to its fullest extent [7; 56–58 p.]. The religious lexis acts as a sociolinguistic marker, distinguishing p.ween those who have preserved their "iymon" (faith) and those who have surrendered to "nafs" (greed/ego).

The use of religious lexis also facilitates "empathetic pragmatics". When the narrator uses religious terms to describe a character's internal suffering, it triggers a specific emotional response in the Uzbek reader, drawing from shared cultural schemas and collective memory [8; 125–127 p.]. This proves that religious lexis in the novel is not just decorative but functional, serving the author's communicative strategy of moral enlightenment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the pragmatic study of religious lexis in Tohir Malik's novel "Shaytanat" demonstrates that these linguistic units are vital for the realization of the author's artistic and didactic goals. The research has shown that:

Religious lexis serves as a primary tool for the moral and ethical categorization of characters, creating a clear pragmatic boundary p.ween the world of faith and the world of sin.

The author uses the pragmatic potential of religious terms to influence the reader's emotions, using eschatological and ethical concepts to provoke reflection on universal human values.

The religious vocabulary in the speech of negative characters often carries a manipulative pragmatic function, reflecting the social reality of the period and the hypocrisy of the underworld.

The pragmatics of religious lexis in the novel is inextricably linked to the national and cultural identity of the Uzbek people, making the work deeply resonant with its audience [9; 18–20 p.].

Ultimately, Tohir Malik's "Shaytanat" utilizes religious lexis as a pragmatic instrument to dissect the pathology of crime and the anatomy of the human soul, reinforcing the idea that language is the ultimate battlefield for the spirit.

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