

A PRAGMATIC DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SATIRE: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK, KARAKALPAK, RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH SATIRISTS

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Abstract: The research is conducted within the framework of pragmatic discourse analysis to explore the satirical language used by selected Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian, and English writers. The article aims to examine how satire functions as a communicative strategy to criticize social, political, and cultural realities across different linguistic and cultural contexts. Through the application of pragmatic tools such as speech acts, implicature, presupposition, and the irony, the study reveals how meaning is constructed and interpreted in satire. The findings highlight both the universal and culturally specific elements of satirical discourse, contributing to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural pragmatics in literary texts.

Key words: Pragmatics, satire, discourse analysis, context, literal meanings, humor, irony, exaggeration, Grice's Maxims, speech act theory, implicature, presupposition, politeness theory, metaphor, symbolism, intertextuality.

Satire is an artistic genre or form that uses various types of humor such as parody, sarcasm, or irony to ridicule a person or situation, usually with the intent of exposing harmful beliefs and actions, and inspiring change. Satire in literature and drama can be found throughout the major eras of human history, and highlights the social and political issues of the time. The term was coined by the classical rhetorician Quintilian, who used the root of the Latin word "satura", which means "full", and was familiar to many Romans from the phrase lanx satura, which described a medley of fruits- and apparently conveyed the miscellaneous quality of early satire.

Satire plays several important roles in both literature and society, often acting as a mirror that reflects the flaws, contradictions, and injustices of human behavior, institutions, and cultural norms. When it comes to the roles of satire in literature, it exposes and critiques **social, political, religious and moral flaws**. Writers usually highlight absurdities or corruption through humor, irony, or exaggeration, or ridicule. Example: George Orwell's "Animal Farm" criticizes totalitarianism and political hypocrisy. Satire engages readers through wit, parody, and humor, making serious topics more accessible. It often uses fictional or exaggerated situations to make complex critiques more relatable. Satire works showcase the author's creative voice and viewpoint. Through satire, writers can push boundaries, challenge norms, and explore taboo topics in indirect ways.

As for the roles of satire in society, it plays four key functions: it reveals social flaws and injustices by drawing attention to issues like inequality or hypocrisy; it challenges political power and authority by mocking corruption, incompetence, or abuse, it corrects unethical behavior by ridiculing vice and encouraging self-reflection; and it inspires the public to think critically, question norms, and push for change through humor and irony.

Satirical language, while universal in function- criticizing societal flaws through humor, irony, and exaggeration- varies significantly across cultural and linguistic contexts. In Uzbek and Karakalpak literature, satire often manifests through subtle irony and metaphor, reflecting a



historically cautious approach to political commentary. The writers such as Abdulla Qodiriy and Muratbay Nizanov veil criticism of social injustice, hypocrisy, or bureaucratic inefficiency under layers of allegory and culturally resonant proverbs. In contrast, Russian satire, exemplified by Nikolai Gogol or Mikhail Zoshchenko, frequently embraces absurdity and grotesque exaggeration to expose the corruption and irrationality of imperial and soviet-era governance. Meanwhile, English satirists like Jonathan Swift and George Orwell use more direct rhetorical strategies such as parody, irony and dystopian allegory to provoke moral reflection and societal reform. These diverse stylistic choices demonstrate how satire is shaped by historical, political, and linguistic factors specific to each cultural context.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how people use a language in the context. Unlike semantics, which focuses on the literal meanings of words and sentences, pragmatics looks at how meaning is constructed and interpreted based on context, speaker intentions, cultural norms, and the relationship between speakers.

As for the key concepts in Pragmatics, **Grice's Maxims** (Cooperative Principle) is used in some certain conversational rules. It was proposed by the philosopher H.P. Grice that successful communication relies on speakers and listeners cooperating by following certain conversational rules called maxims:

Maxim	Explanation	Example of Violation
Quantity	Give the right amount of information	Giving too much or too little
Quality	Be truthful: do not say what you believe to be false	Saying "My father is the President" (when he's not)
Relation	Be relevant	Changing the topic randomly
Manner	Be clear and orderly; avoid ambiguity	Using overly complex words to confuse

Example:
 "How _____ was _____ the _____ movie?"
 B: "Well, _____ the _____ popcorn _____ was _____ nice".
 This flouts the Maxim of Relation, implying the movie was bad.

2.Searle's Speech Act Theory. John Searle developed Speech Act Theory, building on Austin's work. He argued that when we speak, we do not just convey information- we perform actions. There are 3 levels in speech act:

- 1.Locutionary act: The literal meaning (e.g, "Can you open the window?")
- 2.Illocutionary act: The intended function (e.g, a request).
- 3. Perlocutionary act: The effect on the listener (e.g, they actually open the window).

Type	Function	Example
Assertives	State facts or beliefs	"The sky is blue "
Directives	Get someone to do something	"Close the door"
Commissives	Commit the speaker to an action	"I promise to help"
Expressives	Express feelings/emotions	"I'm sorry"

Declarations	Change the reality via speech	“You’re fired”
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From a pragmatic perspective, the interpretation of satirical discourse depends heavily on shared background knowledge, contextual cues, and implicature. Satire frequently violates Grice’s Cooperative Principle- especially the maxims of quality and manner- not to mislead, but to signal irony or exaggeration. For instance, Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” presents an outrageous suggestion (eating children) not as a genuine argument, but as a pragmatic trigger that compels readers to infer deeper socio-political criticism. Similarly, in Karakalpak satire, indirectness and understatement serve to protect both the author and audience within more conservative or politically sensitive environments. Understanding these pragmatic features enables readers to decode the author’s true intent, distinguishing humor from genuine proposition, and irony from sincerity.

Moreover, pragmatic theories such politeness strategies and speech act theory help explain how satirical writers manage social face and authority. Satire often performs indirect speech acts- such as blaming or accusing while appearing to amuse or inform- which can challenge dominant ideologies without provoking direct confrontation. For example, Uzbek satire may employ poetic forms and cultural idioms to soften the blow of criticism while still encouraging social reflection. In Russian satire, on the other hand, characters’ exaggerated behaviors function as speech acts that critique collective societal failures under the guise of fictional absurdity. These pragmatic strategies ensure satire remains socially relevant, especially in societies where direct political speech may be suppressed.

Ultimately, the social impact of satire depends not only on the writer’s linguistic creativity but also on the audience’s ability to interpret pragmatic signals. When successful, satire serves as a powerful tool for social change, raising awareness about inequality, injustice, or corruption through an accessible and often entertaining medium. Pragmatics provides the analytical lens through which readers decode layers of meaning, revealing the ideological critiques hidden beneath humor. Whether in the folkloric wisdom of Karakalpak verse, the post-Soviet skepticism of Russian stories, or the moral outrage of English satire, pragmatic competence is essential for appreciating how satire challenges status quo across cultures.

The key pragmatic tools with definitions and examples from literary works by **Abdulla Qodiriy, Muratbay Nizanov, Nikolai Gogol, and Jonathan Swift**- four authors known for their use of satire and socio-political commentary.

1.Speech Acts- actions performed via utterances, such as promising, ordering, apologizing. They include locutionary (saying something), illocutionary (intended meaning), and perlocutionary acts (effect on the listener). Examples: Abdulla Qodiriy- “ O’tkan kunlar “. In the dialogues between Otabek and Qumri, Otabek’s criticisms of corrupt officials act as illocutionary acts challenging societal norms. Muratbay Nizanov: In his short satirical plays, characters often make sarcastic promises or vows that expose hypocrisy, such as a bureaucrat promising reforms while doing nothing- an ironic illocutionary act.

Gogol- “ The Government Inspector” : Klestakov’s boastful speeches are speech acts of self-praise, meant to deceive. Swift- “ A Modest Proposal” : The entire essay is a satirical speech act, with the speaker proposing child-eating as a solution- a disturbing but deliberate rhetorical device.

2. Implicature- when meaning is implied rather than explicitly stated, relying on context. Examples: Qodiriy: Through subtle hints, he implies the corruption of the old feudal system- for example, when characters praise certain leaders excessively, it implies fear or manipulation rather than admiration. Nizanov: In a comic sketch, a poor man thanks a rich man for a loaf of state bread- implying that even charity is selfish and humiliating. Gogol: “ In “Dead Souls”, when landowners speak of serfs as “ souls”, it implies dehumanization, though it’s never directly stated. Swift: He implies through cold economic calculations that the British government treats Irish lives as commodities.

3.Presupposition- background assumptions embedded in utterances, taken for granted. Examples: Qodiriy: Descriptions of aristocratic lifestyle presuppose that such hierarchy was accepted by society. Nizanov: When a character says, “Since all officials are honest...” the presupposition is that officials are not, highlighting irony. Gogol: The panic among officials upon hearing of the inspector’s visit presupposes their guilt. Swift: Saying “There is a growing number of poor children” presupposes poverty is worsening, a critique of economic failure.

4. Politeness Theory- language strategies to maintain face (self-image), such as positive politeness (showing friendliness) or negative politeness (showing respect, avoiding imposition). Examples: Qodiriy: Female characters use negative politeness in speaking with men, reflecting cultural constraints. Nizanov: His satire often mocks exaggerated politeness, as in officials over-apologizing while being corrupt. Gogol: Khlestakov’s false modesty and polite talk hide manipulation, a form of deceptive positive politeness. Swift: The proposal’s cold formal tone uses negative politeness to create a contrast between formality and the inhumane suggestion.

5.Irony- when the literal meaning is opposite to the intended meaning, often used to critique or mock. Examples: Qodiriy: Uses dramatic irony- the reader understands the tragic fate of characters trapped in outdated traditions while they remain hopeful.

Nizanov : His satirical works are full of irony, such as a poor man calling a bribe” a gift of love.” Gogol: The entire premise of “The Government Inspector “ is ironic- the most corrupt man is mistaken for an inspector. Swift: “His ironic tone in “A Modest Proposal” critiques British colonial cruelty through exaggerated reasoning.

These pragmatic tools not only convey satire, but also deepen the social criticism in each author’s work. By applying them, we can decode layered meanings and see how humor, critique, and cultural commentary are embedded in language use across different literary traditions.

The selected sentences from the works of Abdulla Qodiriy, Muratbay Nizanov, Nikolai Gogol, and Jonathan Swift, each followed by discourse analysis using tools such as metaphor, irony, intertextuality, code-switching, and more.

1. Abdulla Qodiriy – O‘tkan kunlar

Sentence: “Tuproqqa qorishgan sochlari bilan Musulmonxon ayaning chehrasi hammayoqdan g‘amzalarni ko‘rsatardi.”

(“With hair mingled with dust, Muslimkhon's face radiated sorrows from all directions.”)

Discourse **Analysis:**

Metaphor: “Hair mingled with dust” is a metaphor for grief, age, and suffering, not just a physical state. It signals how tradition and hardship weigh down women. **Symbolism:** Dust and sorrow reflect the loss of dignity of women in a decaying feudal system. **Intertextuality:** The description echoes classical Persian poetic images of suffering heroines, grounding the novel in Islamic cultural heritage.

2. Muratbay Nizanov – Oshqozon yig‘ilishi (Stomach Assembly)

Sentence: “Miyamiz har kuni dam oladi, chunki u ishlamaydi, faqat bizni kuzatadi.”

(“Our brain rests every day because it doesn’t work—just watches us.”)

Discourse Analysis:

Irony: The sentence pretends to praise rest but actually ridicules intellectual laziness and passive behavior. **Personification +**

Metaphor: The brain is personified as a lazy observer, symbolizing inactive citizens or bureaucrats. **Hyperbole:** The brain

“doesn’t work” is an exaggeration, stressing lack of critical thinking in society. **Political Discourse:** Indirectly mocks Soviet-era indoctrination that discouraged individual reasoning.

3. Nikolai Gogol – The Government Inspector (Revizor)

Sentence: “What are you laughing at? — You’re laughing at yourselves!” **Discourse Analysis:** **Irony:** This is a classic case of dramatic irony. The audience knows that the townspeople are indeed the joke, though they don’t realize it.

Self-reflexivity: The line turns satire inward—viewers and readers are implicated, reminding them of universal hypocrisy.

Speech Act: This is a reproach disguised as a question, carrying strong illocutionary force—shaming the characters and audience.

Intertextuality: Echoes the structure of Shakespearean irony, especially from Hamlet or King Lear.

4. Jonathan Swift – A Modest Proposal

Sentence: “A young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food.”

Discourse Analysis:

Irony + Hyperbole: The grotesque suggestion is deeply ironic. Swift uses deliberate exaggeration to expose inhuman economic policies.

Metaphor: Children become commodities, symbolizing how colonial powers “consume” the poor.

Genre Parody: Mimics the rational tone of economic pamphlets to criticize how logic is misused to justify oppression.

Presupposition: Presumes that the reader accepts treating humans as resources—which forces readers to confront their own apathy.

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