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O'ZBEK MAQOL VA MATALLARIDA MANIPULYATSIYANING PRAGMATIK MEXANIZMLARI

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Annotatsiya

Maqollar va matallar odatda jamoaviy donolik va hayotiy tajribaning ixcham ifodasi sifatida qabul qilinadi. Biroq kundalik muloqotda ular pragmatik ta'sir vositasi sifatida ham faoliyat yuritadi. Ushbu maqolada maqollar va matallarda manipulyatsiya hodisasi pragmatik nuqtayi nazardan tahlil qilinadi hamda bilvosita nutqning madaniy jihatdan shakllangan ko'rinishlari sifatida o'zbek maqollariga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqot sifatli, diskursga yo'naltirilgan yondashuv asosida olib borilib, nutq aktlari nazariyasi, Grays pragmatikasi va tanqidiy diskurs tahliliga tayanadi. Tahlil jarayonida manipulyatsiya bilvosita nutq aktlari, suhbat implikaturasi va presuppozitsiya orqali qanday amalga oshirilishi aniqlanadi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, o'zbek maqollari kamdan-kam hollarda betaraf bayonot sifatida qo'llanadi; aksincha, ular umumiylik va madaniy avtoritet ko'rinishini saqlagan holda maslahat berish, tuzatish va tartibga solish funksiyalarini bajaradi. Bilvositalik baholovchi hukmlarni shaxsiy fikr emas, balki umumiy donolik sifatida taqdim etish orqali qarshilikni kamaytiradi, presuppozitsiya esa axloqiy va ijtimoiy me'yorlarni shubhasiz haqiqat sifatida mustahkamlaydi. Umuman olganda, tadqiqot an'anaviy diskursning manipulyativ salohiyatini yoritib beradi va pragmatika hamda paremiologiya integratsiyasiga hissa qo'shadi.

Kalit so'zlar: maqollar va matallar; pragmatik manipulyatsiya; bilvosita nutq aktlari; suhbat implikaturasi; presuppozitsiya; diskurs tahlili; paremiologiya; madaniy diskurs; mafkuraviy ta'sir; ijtimoiy tartibga solish; o'zbek maqollari

ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ МЕХАНИЗМЫ МАНИПУЛЯЦИИ В УЗБЕКСКИХ ПОСЛОВИЦАХ И ПОГОВОРКАХ

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Аннотация

Пословицы и поговорки традиционно воспринимаются как краткие выражения коллективной мудрости и жизненного опыта. Однако в повседневной коммуникации они также функционируют как прагматические инструменты воздействия. В данной статье рассматривается феномен манипуляции в пословицах и поговорках с прагматической точки зрения, с особым акцентом на узбекские пословицы как культурно обусловленные формы косвенного дискурса. Исследование основано на качественном, дискурсивно-ориентированном подходе и опирается на теорию речевых актов, грайсовскую прагматику и критический дискурс-анализ. В работе анализируется, каким образом манипуляция реализуется через косвенные речевые акты, разговорную импликацию и пресуппозицию. Результаты показывают, что узбекские пословицы редко функционируют как нейтральные высказывания; напротив, они выполняют консультативные, корректирующие и регулятивные функции, сохраняя при этом видимость обобщённости и культурного авторитета. Косвенность снижает

сопротивление, представляя оценочные суждения как коллективную мудрость, а не индивидуальное мнение, в то время как пресуппозиция закрепляет моральные и социальные нормы как самоочевидные истины. В целом исследование подчёркивает манипулятивный потенциал традиционного дискурса и вносит вклад в интеграцию прагматики и паремиологии.

Ключевые слова: пословицы и поговорки; прагматическая манипуляция; косвенные речевые акты; разговорная импликатура; пресуппозиция; дискурс-анализ; паремиология; культурный дискурс; идеологическое воздействие; социальная регуляция; узбекские пословицы

PRAGMATIC MECHANISMS OF MANIPULATION IN UZBEK PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

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Abstract

Proverbs and sayings are commonly perceived as concise expressions of collective wisdom; however, in everyday communication they also function as pragmatic instruments of influence. This article examines manipulation in proverbs and sayings from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on Uzbek proverbs as culturally embedded forms of indirect discourse. Using a qualitative, discourse-oriented approach, the study draws on speech act theory, Gricean pragmatics, and critical discourse analysis to explore how manipulation is realized through indirect speech acts, conversational implicature, and presupposition. The findings demonstrate that Uzbek proverbs rarely operate as neutral statements; instead, they perform advisory, corrective, and regulatory functions while maintaining an appearance of generality and cultural authority. Indirectness reduces resistance by framing evaluative judgments as shared wisdom rather than individual opinion, while presupposition embeds moral and social norms as taken-for-granted truths. Overall, the study highlights the manipulative potential of traditional discourse and contributes to the integration of pragmatics and paremiology.

Keywords: proverbs and sayings; pragmatic manipulation; indirect speech acts; conversational implicature; presupposition; discourse analysis; paremiology; cultural discourse; ideological influence; social regulation; Uzbek proverbs

Proverbs and sayings occupy an important place in language as condensed expressions of collective experience, moral evaluation, and cultural norms. As Wolfgang Mieder notes, proverbs function as culturally transmitted forms of knowledge that reflect shared values and social expectations. Similarly, Akporobaro emphasizes their role as repositories of communal wisdom rather than merely decorative elements of speech. While such approaches highlight the cultural and didactic significance of proverbs, they often overlook their active role in everyday communication. From a pragmatic perspective, proverbs rarely function as neutral statements. Instead, they are frequently used to advise, warn, criticize, or justify behavior while maintaining an appearance of generality. By presenting evaluations as traditional wisdom rather than personal opinion, speakers reduce resistance and limit opportunities for open disagreement. This communicative feature makes proverbs particularly effective instruments of indirect influence.

The concept of manipulation is central to understanding this influence. As Teun van Dijk argues, manipulation involves shaping interpretation and behavior through implicit

communicative strategies rather than overt coercion. In contrast to direct persuasion, manipulation relies on shared assumptions, conventionalized meanings, and contextual inference. Proverbs are especially well suited to this function because their meanings are culturally stabilized and socially legitimized.

The theoretical framework of this study draws on linguistic pragmatics. According to J. L. Austin, utterances perform actions beyond their literal meaning, regardless of grammatical form. Building on this view, John Searle demonstrates that indirect speech acts allow speakers to perform directives and evaluations without explicit formulation. H. P. Grice further explains that meaning is often conveyed through inference, as listeners derive intended meanings via conversational implicature rather than direct statement. Together, these perspectives provide a foundation for analyzing how proverbs achieve their pragmatic effects.

In addition, discourse-analytical approaches emphasize the social consequences of language use. Norman Fairclough shows that discourse contributes to the reproduction of social norms by framing certain values as natural and unquestionable. This insight is particularly relevant to proverb usage, where moral judgments are often embedded as taken-for-granted truths. Uzbek proverbs offer especially rich material for such analysis. As Qodirova observes, they are deeply integrated into everyday interaction, family communication, and moral instruction, encoding norms related to speech behavior, patience, hierarchy, and social conduct. Despite extensive research on proverbs from semantic and cultural perspectives, their manipulative potential has not been sufficiently examined within an integrated pragmatic framework, particularly with respect to Uzbek data. The present study addresses this gap by analyzing manipulation in proverbs and sayings from a pragmatic perspective. Focusing on indirect speech acts, conversational implicature, and presupposition, the article aims to demonstrate that proverbs function not merely as reflections of traditional wisdom but as active instruments of discourse that shape interpretation and regulate social behavior.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative, discourse-oriented research design grounded in linguistic pragmatics and paremiology. A qualitative approach is appropriate for investigating manipulation in proverbs, as the phenomenon involves implicit meaning, contextual interpretation, and culturally embedded norms rather than quantifiable variables (van Dijk, 2006, pp. 359–365). The study is theoretical–analytical in nature and focuses on identifying pragmatic mechanisms of influence rather than measuring frequency or distribution.

The data consist of Uzbek proverbs and sayings selected from commonly used paremiological sources and everyday communicative practice. Uzbek proverbs were chosen due to their strong integration into interpersonal interaction, moral instruction, and public discourse, which makes them particularly suitable for pragmatic analysis (Qodirova, 2025, pp. 660–663). The selection focused on proverbs addressing speech behavior, moral evaluation, social hierarchy, and endurance.

Proverbs were selected according to pragmatic relevance, cultural conventionalization, and analytical potential, following established qualitative approaches in proverb studies (Akporobaro, 2008, pp. 1–8).

The analysis integrates speech act theory, Gricean pragmatics, and critical discourse analysis. Proverbs are examined as indirect speech acts performing advisory, corrective, or regulatory functions (Austin, 1962, pp. 94–107). Conversational implicature is used to identify inferred meanings that guide interpretation beyond literal content (Grice, 1975, pp. 41–58), while presupposition analysis reveals embedded moral and social assumptions.

Elements of critical discourse analysis are applied to situate proverb usage within

broader ideological contexts, examining how repeated proverbial patterns contribute to the reproduction of social norms and authority relations.

Results

The qualitative analysis of Uzbek proverbs demonstrates that manipulation in proverbial discourse is not incidental but structurally embedded in conventional forms of expression. Across the corpus, proverbs function as indirect instruments of influence that guide interpretation and regulate social behavior without explicit coercion. The following sections present the main pragmatic patterns through which this influence is realized.

The findings demonstrate that Uzbek proverbs consistently perform indirect illocutionary acts, despite their generalized and impersonal structure. Rather than functioning as neutral observations, proverbs operate as actions such as advice, warning, reprimand, or moral correction. This confirms the central claim of speech act theory that utterances may perform actions independently of their grammatical form (Austin, 1962, pp. 94–107; Searle, 1969, pp. 16–24). The proverb “Avval o‘zingga boq, keyin nog‘orangni qoq” (“Correct yourself before correcting others”) functions as an indirect reproach. In interaction, it is typically used to silence criticism or redirect blame without openly accusing the interlocutor. The speaker avoids direct confrontation while still exerting evaluative pressure. The illocutionary force is recognized through shared cultural norms rather than explicit linguistic markers.

Another indirect directive is observed in “Ko‘p gap — eshakka yuk”. Although the proverb is framed descriptively, it pragmatically discourages excessive speech. In discourse, it performs a regulatory function, implicitly advising restraint. The result shows that proverbs are frequently used to control communicative behavior under the guise of general wisdom. A further pattern emerges in proverbs that indirectly warn against impulsive behavior. “Shoshgan qiz erga yolchimapti” operates as an indirect warning that equates haste with moral failure. The illocutionary force is strengthened by metaphorical association rather than direct command. These findings demonstrate that indirectness is a defining feature of proverbial speech acts, enabling influence while preserving politeness and social harmony (Leech, 1983, pp. 80–105).

A second major finding concerns the pervasive role of conversational implicature in Uzbek proverbs. The data show that proverbs rarely state their evaluative message explicitly; instead, they rely on metaphor and shared cultural knowledge to guide the listener toward intended conclusions. This pattern corresponds to Grice’s theory of implicature, according to which meaning is often inferred rather than stated (Grice, 1975, pp. 41–58).

The proverb “Boshga balo qaydan kelur, ikki enlik tildan kelur” (“The trouble of the tongue is the trouble of the head”) generates an implicature that careless speech leads to serious personal consequences. In interaction, the proverb is used to discipline speech behavior without overt instruction. The listener infers the warning independently, which increases acceptance and reduces resistance. Another example is “O‘q birni o‘ldirur, so‘z mingni”. This proverb implicates the emotional impact of language rather than its physical power. Pragmatically, it reinforces the norm that speech carries moral responsibility. The analysis shows that such implicatures regulate emotional expression and interpersonal conduct indirectly. The proverb “Har gapning o‘z mavridi bor” (“Every word has its place”) further illustrates inferential control. Rather than explicitly forbidding speech, it implies contextual limitation. In discourse, this proverb constrains when and how truth may be spoken, subtly prioritizing social harmony over directness. These findings support pragmatic research showing that implicature is a key mechanism of indirect manipulation in culturally conventionalized discourse (Situma, 2024, pp. 2586–2590).

The analysis also reveals that presupposition functions as a powerful manipulative mechanism in Uzbek proverbs by embedding moral and social assumptions as unquestionable background knowledge. Many proverbs present evaluative judgments as self-evident truths, thereby limiting interpretive alternatives and discouraging disagreement.

For example, “Mehnat qilgan och qolmas” (“One who works will not starve”) presupposes a direct causal link between labor and well-being. In discourse, this proverb naturalizes economic outcomes and shifts responsibility for hardship onto individuals. The presupposed moral framework is not debated; it is taken for granted, confirming van Dijk’s observation that presupposition plays a central role in ideological manipulation (van Dijk, 2006, pp. 365–370). Similarly, “Sabrning tagi- sariq oltin” (“Patience is the key to salvation”) presupposes that endurance is inherently virtuous and ultimately rewarded. When used in interaction, the proverb frames patience as a moral obligation rather than a strategic choice. The result shows that presupposition enables proverbs to discourage protest or complaint while maintaining an appearance of moral encouragement. Another recurrent presupposition appears in “Qanoat-qizil oltin” (“One who submits to fate lives in peace”). This proverb embeds acceptance of fate as a prerequisite for harmony, presupposing that resistance is undesirable. The data show that such presuppositions normalize passivity and limit critical engagement with social conditions.

Beyond individual pragmatic mechanisms, the findings reveal that Uzbek proverbs systematically contribute to ideological regulation by reinforcing norms related to hierarchy, obedience, and conformity. Proverbs frequently encode social expectations as moral imperatives rather than negotiable conventions. The proverb “Kattaga hurmat — kichikka izzat” (“Respect for elders is an example for the young”) presupposes the legitimacy of age-based authority. In discourse, it functions to regulate behavior across generations, discouraging questioning of elders’ decisions. Similarly, “Boshing egik bo’lsa, tosh tegmaydi” (“If your head is bowed, no stone will hit it”) frames submission as a strategy for safety, implicitly discouraging assertiveness. Another ideological pattern appears in proverbs that valorize silence and restraint, such as “Tilni tiygan omon bo’lur” (“The silent one stays safe”). The proverb indirectly associates silence with survival, reinforcing conformity. These results align with cross-cultural findings that proverbs often function as tools for maintaining existing power relations (Mieder, 2004, pp. 15–25; Schipper, 1991, pp. 3–10).

A final result concerns the cumulative operation of pragmatic mechanisms. The analysis shows that manipulation in Uzbek proverbs rarely relies on a single strategy. Instead, indirect speech acts, implicature, and presupposition frequently operate simultaneously, producing layered influence. For instance, “Tilni tiygan omon bo’lur” simultaneously performs indirect advice, implicates danger in visibility, and presupposes the value of conformity. This convergence amplifies persuasive force while preserving the proverb’s appearance of neutral wisdom. The data indicate that such layering explains the enduring effectiveness of proverbs in everyday communication. Taken together, the expanded results confirm that Uzbek proverbs function as robust instruments of pragmatic manipulation. Through diverse indirect speech acts, implicatures, and presuppositions, they shape interpretation, regulate behavior, and reinforce social norms without explicit coercion. These findings establish proverbs as active agents of communicative influence and provide a solid empirical foundation for the interpretive discussion that follows.

Discussion

The findings presented in the Results section demonstrate that Uzbek proverbs function as systematic instruments of pragmatic manipulation through indirect speech acts, implicature, and presupposition. The present Discussion interprets these findings by situating

them within established theories of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and proverb studies, thereby clarifying their theoretical and cultural significance.

One of the central implications of the findings is that proverbs should be understood primarily as pragmatic actions, not as neutral repositories of wisdom. While paremiological studies have long emphasized the cultural and didactic value of proverbs (Mieder, 2004, pp. 1–25; Akporobaro, 2008, pp. 1–12), the present analysis confirms that their communicative function is fundamentally action-oriented. This observation aligns with speech act theory, which posits that utterances perform actions regardless of their surface grammatical form (Austin, 1962, pp. 94–107; Searle, 1969, pp. 16–24). In Uzbek discourse, proverbs frequently perform advisory, corrective, or regulatory actions while maintaining an appearance of generality. The use of generalized formulations allows speakers to distance themselves from the evaluative content, transferring responsibility to tradition. This pragmatic “delegation of authority” enhances the persuasive force of the utterance while protecting interpersonal harmony. The discussion thus reinforces the view that indirectness is not a secondary feature of proverbial discourse but a core functional property.

The prominence of indirect speech acts in Uzbek proverbs can be further interpreted through the lens of politeness theory. As Leech (1983, pp. 80–105) argues, indirectness often serves to minimize face-threatening acts and maintain social equilibrium. The findings suggest that proverbs provide a culturally sanctioned means of delivering criticism or advice while avoiding overt confrontation. However, while politeness explains how indirectness is socially acceptable, it does not fully account for why it is so effective as a manipulative tool. The present analysis shows that indirectness increases manipulative efficiency by reducing the recipient’s opportunity to challenge the message. Since the proverb speaks “in general,” disagreement risks being interpreted as rejection of collective wisdom rather than personal opinion. This insight extends politeness theory by highlighting its interaction with cultural authority in traditional discourse.

The discussion of implicature reveals that Uzbek proverbs exert influence by guiding inference rather than imposing explicit judgments. In line with Grice’s theory, meaning is derived through cooperative interpretation rather than direct statement (Grice, 1975, pp. 41–58). What distinguishes proverbial implicature, however, is its conventionalized nature. Unlike conversational implicature in spontaneous dialogue, proverbial implicature relies on culturally stabilized associations that are widely shared and rarely questioned.

This conventionalization contributes to the naturalization of evaluation. When moral judgments are implied rather than stated, they appear less ideological and more self-evident. The listener is led to “arrive at” the conclusion independently, which increases acceptance. The present findings therefore support the claim that implicature is not merely a pragmatic phenomenon but also an ideological one, especially when embedded in traditional expressions (Situma, 2024, pp. 2586–2590).

The role of presupposition in Uzbek proverbs is particularly significant from a discourse-analytical perspective. Presuppositions embed values and assumptions as background knowledge, effectively removing them from debate. As van Dijk (2006, pp. 365–370) notes, such implicit assumptions are central to ideological discourse because they constrain interpretation without overt argumentation. The findings indicate that many Uzbek proverbs presuppose norms related to patience, obedience, diligence, and respect for hierarchy. These presuppositions function ideologically by presenting social expectations as moral necessities. The discussion thus confirms Fairclough’s argument that discourse contributes to the reproduction of social order by framing norms as natural and unquestionable (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 60–72).

Importantly, this does not imply that proverbs are inherently oppressive. Rather, their ideological effect depends on context and usage. Proverbs may promote social cohesion and moral orientation, but they may also discourage critical engagement by framing endurance and conformity as virtues. Recognizing this dual function is essential for a balanced understanding of proverbial discourse. The findings also suggest that Uzbek proverbs play a significant role in social regulation. Through repeated use in family interaction, education, and public discourse, proverbs become part of individuals' cognitive and moral frameworks. Over time, the values embedded in proverbs are internalized, shaping expectations about appropriate behavior. This observation aligns with cross-cultural paremiological research showing that proverbs often reinforce dominant social norms, including gender roles and power relations (Schipper, 1991, pp. 3–10; Mieder, 2004, pp. 15–25). The present study contributes to this literature by demonstrating how such regulation operates pragmatically through indirectness and inference rather than explicit instruction.

From a theoretical perspective, the present discussion highlights the importance of integrating pragmatics and paremiology. While proverb studies have traditionally focused on semantics and cultural symbolism, the current analysis demonstrates that pragmatic mechanisms are central to understanding how proverbs function in real interaction. By combining speech act theory, implicature, presupposition, and discourse analysis, the study offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing manipulation in traditional expressions. Moreover, by focusing on Uzbek proverbs, the article contributes to the diversification of pragmatic research, which has often been dominated by English-language data. The findings demonstrate that while pragmatic mechanisms are universal, their realization is culturally specific, shaped by local norms and communicative traditions (Qodirova, 2025, pp. 660–663).

The discussion also acknowledges certain limitations. The study is qualitative and interpretative, focusing on selected proverbs rather than a statistically representative corpus. While this approach allows for depth of analysis, future research could complement it with corpus-based or experimental methods to examine frequency and reception. Nevertheless, the implications of the findings are significant. Understanding the manipulative potential of proverbs has relevance for education, intercultural communication, and critical discourse awareness. By recognizing how traditional expressions influence interpretation, speakers and listeners can engage with cultural heritage more critically and responsibly.

Conclusion

This study has examined Uzbek proverbs and sayings as pragmatic instruments of manipulation, demonstrating that their communicative power extends far beyond the transmission of traditional wisdom. By adopting an integrated pragmatic and discourse-analytical framework, the article has shown that proverbs function as indirect mechanisms of influence that guide interpretation, regulate behavior, and legitimize social norms without explicit coercion. The analysis revealed that manipulation in proverbial discourse is primarily realized through three interrelated pragmatic mechanisms: indirect speech acts, conversational implicature, and presupposition. Proverbs were shown to perform advisory, corrective, and regulatory actions while maintaining an appearance of generality and neutrality. Their indirect illocutionary force allows speakers to influence interlocutors while minimizing interpersonal conflict, confirming core assumptions of speech act theory (Austin, 1962, pp. 94–107; Searle, 1969, pp. 16–24).

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that implicature plays a central role in shaping inference in proverbial communication. Rather than stating moral judgments explicitly, Uzbek proverbs guide recipients toward culturally preferred interpretations through metaphor and shared background knowledge. This inferential process enhances acceptance by

presenting evaluations as self-evident rather than imposed, supporting Gricean accounts of indirect meaning while highlighting their ideological implications (Grice, 1975, pp. 41–58).

Presupposition emerged as a particularly powerful mechanism of manipulation. Many proverbs embed moral and social assumptions as taken-for-granted truths, thereby limiting interpretive alternatives and discouraging disagreement. By framing values such as patience, obedience, diligence, and respect for hierarchy as unquestionable norms, proverbs contribute to the naturalization of social expectations and the reproduction of ideological structures (van Dijk, 2006, pp. 365–370; Fairclough, 1995, pp. 60–72).

At the broader social level, the findings indicate that Uzbek proverbs function as tools of long-term social regulation. Through repeated use in everyday interaction, education, and moral instruction, they shape collective attitudes and behavioral norms. While such functions may promote cohesion and stability, they may also discourage critical reflection by moralizing endurance and conformity. Recognizing this dual function is essential for a balanced understanding of proverbial discourse.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its integration of pragmatics and paremiology. By moving beyond semantic and folkloric descriptions, the article demonstrates that pragmatic mechanisms are central to understanding how proverbs operate in real communicative contexts. In addition, the focus on Uzbek data expands the empirical scope of pragmatic research, illustrating how universal pragmatic processes are realized through culturally specific forms (Mieder, 2004, pp. 15–25; Akporobaro, 2008, pp. 1–12; Qodirova, 2025, pp. 660–663).

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study adopts a qualitative, interpretative approach and does not aim to provide statistical generalization. Future research may complement this analysis with corpus-based studies, experimental methods, or comparative investigations across languages and cultures. Such approaches could further explore frequency, reception, and contextual variation in proverbial manipulation.

In conclusion, this article argues that proverbs and sayings should not be viewed as neutral or purely decorative elements of language. Rather, they are active pragmatic agents that participate in shaping interpretation, behavior, and ideology through indirectness, inference, and cultural authority. Developing critical awareness of these mechanisms enables a more reflective engagement with traditional discourse and highlights the continuing relevance of pragmatics in the study of language, culture, and power.

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