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RELATIONSHIP AND LINGUOPOETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF OXYMORON AND PARADOX

Abdumalik Inomjonovich Saminov

Associate Professor of the Department of Linguistics,

Doctor of Philosophy in Philology (PhD), Fergana State University

Email: abdumaliksaminov@gmail.com

ORCID ID 0009-0009-2971-8298

Abstract

This article examines the relationship between oxymoron and paradox as interconnected yet independent linguopoetic phenomena. Although both devices are based on contradiction and the interaction of opposing concepts, they differ significantly in their structural organization, semantic mechanisms, and artistic functions. The study focuses on the syntactic and semantic realization of oxymoron in Uzbek literary discourse and compares its characteristics with those of paradox. Particular attention is paid to the mechanisms through which oxymoron creates aesthetic unity from semantic opposition, whereas paradox preserves contradiction as a logical and philosophical problem aimed at revealing deeper truths. The analysis demonstrates that oxymoron primarily functions as a syntactic-stylistic device, while paradox serves as a semantic-logical means of expressing unconventional judgments and stimulating intellectual reflection. The findings contribute to a clearer understanding of the linguopoetic nature of these phenomena and reveal the necessity of distinguishing between them in modern stylistic and linguopoetic studies.

Keywords: Oxymoron, paradox, linguopoetics, stylistics, semantic contradiction, syntactic structure, artistic discourse, aesthetic function, semantic opposition, Uzbek linguistics.

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Introduction

The study of expressive means occupying an intermediate position between language structure and artistic thinking has become one of the important directions of contemporary linguistics. Within anthropocentric and linguopoetic paradigms, scholars increasingly focus on the mechanisms through which language reflects the complexity of human cognition and aesthetic perception. Among such phenomena, oxymoron and paradox deserve particular attention because they both rely on contradiction and deviation from ordinary logic.

Traditionally, oxymoron has been defined as a stylistic figure formed through the combination of semantically incompatible lexical units within a single syntactic construction. Paradox, in contrast, is generally interpreted as a logically contradictory judgment that initially appears absurd but eventually reveals an underlying truth. Despite their shared reliance on contrast and unexpectedness, these phenomena perform different functions within artistic discourse.

In Uzbek linguistics, oxymoron has primarily been investigated within the framework of stylistics and linguopoetics, whereas paradox has often been examined from philosophical and literary perspectives. However, the relationship between these two phenomena and the criteria distinguishing them remain insufficiently explored. Therefore, a comparative investigation of their structural-semantic and functional characteristics is both theoretically and practically significant.

Literature Review

The origins of scholarly interest in contradiction as an artistic device can be traced back to classical rhetoric. Ancient thinkers, particularly Aristotle, recognized the aesthetic potential of unusual combinations and unexpected expressions. Later developments in rhetorical and poetic theory further elaborated the artistic functions of contradiction.

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Twentieth-century linguistics approached oxymoron primarily from a stylistic perspective. Viktor Vinogradov regarded oxymoron as an important means of enhancing the figurativeness of poetic speech through semantic opposition. He emphasized that oxymoron creates new artistic content rather than merely juxtaposing incompatible concepts.

I.R. Galperin defined oxymoron as a stylistic device resulting from the combination of semantically incompatible concepts and argued that its principal function is to attract the reader's attention through unexpected semantic associations.

Within Uzbek linguistics, Shavkat Abdurakhmonov demonstrated that oxymoronic meanings may emerge not only within phrases but also at sentence and textual levels. According to the scholar, semantic contradiction may occur through conflicts between propositions, thereby extending oxymoron's scope beyond lexical combinations.

The relationship between oxymoron and paradox has also attracted scholarly attention. S.I. Kormilov interpreted oxymoron as a particular form of paradox. However, such an approach remains controversial because these phenomena differ in their mechanisms of formation and semantic organization. The present study supports the view that, although oxymoron and paradox share a common basis in contradiction, they should be treated as related but independent linguopoetic devices.

Methodology and Methods

The research employs a qualitative descriptive methodology grounded in linguopoetic and stylistic analysis.

The following methods were utilized:

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Descriptive Method. Theoretical sources concerning oxymoron and paradox were reviewed to identify their defining characteristics and establish conceptual boundaries. Structural-Semantic Analysis. Oxymoronic constructions were examined in terms of their syntactic organization and semantic interaction. Particular attention was paid to the ways in which semantically contradictory elements generate unified artistic meanings. Comparative Method. The study compared oxymoron and paradox by analyzing their similarities and differences regarding semantic mechanisms, structural realization, and communicative functions. Contextual Analysis. Examples extracted from Uzbek literary texts were interpreted within their textual environments to determine their linguopoetic functions and aesthetic effects. Functional Analysis. The expressive and cognitive roles of oxymoron and paradox in literary discourse were investigated to clarify their contribution to artistic representation and reader engagement. This methodological combination made it possible to reveal both the shared foundations and distinctive features of the two phenomena.

The main part

Oxymoron, since it embodies contradiction and unusualness in its semantic basis, is closely related to the phenomenon of paradox. Both phenomena are based on the interaction of contrasting and contradictory concepts. Therefore, in some studies, oxymoron and paradox are interpreted as stylistic phenomena that are close to or similar to each other. However, it is scientifically incorrect to evaluate them as one phenomenon. Because the semantic structure, mechanism of occurrence, and linguopoetic functions of these units differ from each other. Oxymoron is mainly a stylistic figure that arises as a result of the combination of semantically contradictory units in one syntactic device. Paradox, on the other hand, appears as a thought, judgment, or reasoning that seems logically contradictory or contrary to the general idea, but upon closer observation expresses a certain truth. While in paradox, the contradiction is observed more at

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the level of judgments and thoughts, in oxymoron, the semantic contradiction is expressed through the syntactic combination of language units.

Each component in the paradox usually has an independent and logically based meaning, and as a result of their interaction, a contradictory content arises. In some cases, one thought denies the other or is opposed to traditional views formed in the social consciousness. In this regard, paradox is considered a phenomenon closely related to logic, philosophy, and aesthetic thinking.

Although oxymoron and paradox have common features based on contrast, their linguistic nature and artistic functions are not the same. While oxymoron is more related to the syntactic-stylistic possibilities of language, paradox serves to express the logical-philosophical contradiction of thought. Therefore, it is appropriate to study these phenomena as interconnected but independent linguopoetic means.

Thus, despite the fact that oxymoron and paradox share a common semantic basis, their structural-semantic properties and artistic-aesthetic functions differ from each other. Clarifying these aspects allows us to shed more light on the linguopoetic essence of oxymoron.

Researcher S.I. Kormilov interprets oxymoron as a specific form of paradox and evaluates it as a stylistic phenomenon of a paradoxical nature¹. However, the issue of studying oxymoron in the framework of a complete paradox is controversial. Because the mechanism of occurrence and semantic nature of these phenomena differ from each other to a certain extent. In oxymoron, semantically opposite units are combined into one syntactic construction, forming a new figurative content. Although the components enter into a relationship of mutual contradiction, they do not completely negate each other, but, on the contrary, serve to form a single artistic and aesthetic content.

¹ Кормилов С.И. Литературная энциклопедия терминов и понятий // гл. ред. и сост. А.Н. Николюкин. – М.: НПКи Интелвак, 2001. С. 690-691.

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Paradox is not a simple contradictory thought or a judgment with contradictory content, but a complex semantic phenomenon associated with poetic, aesthetic, logical and philosophical thinking. It appears as a statement that contradicts traditional ideas about reality, that at first seems logically inconsistent or unexpected, but upon deeper analysis reveals a certain truth. In this sense, paradox is one of the linguopoetic devices that reflects the complex and contradictory nature of human thought.

The term "paradox" comes from the Greek word *paradoxos*, which means "unexpected", "unusual", "contrary to general views"². This concept began to be actively used in European literary and aesthetic thought since the Middle Ages. In scientific sources, a paradox is usually interpreted as an idea or reasoning that contradicts the views widespread in society and generally accepted, but has a certain basis. The essence of paradox is manifested in the fact that it reveals new aspects of reality through this unexpectedness and contradiction. In fiction, paradox serves as an important tool for expressing the author's aesthetic intention, encouraging the reader to observe, and illuminating the complex aspects of reality. For example, in Muhammad Yusuf's poem "To My Friend", paradoxical content arises through the expression of unexpected and unusual desires:

Oydim, ko'ngilda bir ko'shk bezaylik,
Gulim yur, dilim, yur, gulzor kezaylik.
Biz endi to'ysak ham visoldan to'yib,
Biz endi bezsak ham – baxtdan bezaylik...
Muhammad qadriga yetmagan ey hur –
Boringga shukurlar, boringga shukur.

In this verse, expressions such as "satisfied with pleasure", "deprived of happiness" create a logically unexpected meaning. Because, according to the usual idea, a person does not deprive himself of pleasure or happiness. It is precisely through this paradoxical expression that the poet managed to express

² Литературная энциклопедия / гл. редактор А.В. Луначарский. – М.: ОГИЗ, РСФСР, 1934. – Т.8. – С. 271.

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the extremely high appreciation of happiness and love, the endless need for them, in an artistic and aesthetic form. As a result, paradox appears as a linguopoetic tool that reveals aspects of reality that cannot be explained by simple logic.

Thus, although there is a general contrast between paradox and oxymoron, their linguistic nature and functional tasks differ. Paradox, mainly, is based on a logical-philosophical contradiction at the level of judgments and thoughts, while oxymoron creates an artistic and aesthetic meaning through the syntactic combination of semantically opposite units. Therefore, it is appropriate to study these phenomena as interconnected, but independent linguopoetic tools.

Paradox is a semantic-logical phenomenon that arises as a result of the simultaneous existence of two or more logically contradictory views. Paradoxical thought initially seems inconsistent with generally accepted ideas and traditional views, or even contrary to logic. However, upon closer analysis of its essence, it becomes clear that it serves to reveal new and unexpected aspects of reality. Therefore, paradox is not only a means of expressing opposing views, but also an intellectual-aesthetic phenomenon that encourages a reconsideration of existing stereotypes and fixed views. One of the important features of paradox is that it shows that conventional theoretical ideas about life and reality do not always reflect the absolute truth. Paradoxical thinking critically analyzes the views formed in society, accepted as unchanging and absolute, and demonstrates their relativity. As a result, paradox serves as an important factor in the renewal of thinking and the improvement of existing knowledge and ideas.

In fiction, paradox is used as an effective linguopoetic tool to express the author's aesthetic intention, encourage the reader to observe, and illuminate the complex aspects of reality. For example, Otkir Hoshimov's thought: "Protect the bad, beware of the bad! If there is no bad, the value of the good will remain unknown!" is a vivid example of paradoxical expression. In this sentence, the author expresses an unexpected reaction to the concept of "bad", which is usually negatively assessed by society. At first glance, this thought seems to contradict

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generally accepted moral standards. Because, according to the usual idea, society seeks to reduce or eliminate evil. However, the author reveals the dialectical relationship between good and evil through a paradoxical approach. That is, it is emphasized that the value and social significance of the concept of "good" are fully manifested only when its opposite pole, the concept of "bad", exists. As a result, paradox serves to express a deep philosophical and moral content through a thought that initially seems logically inconsistent.

In a literary text, paradox appears as one of the important expressive means of poetic speech. Its content and functional function are determined by the author's aesthetic intention, individual style, and characteristics of artistic thinking³. In particular, paradoxical thoughts used in the speech of heroes serve as an important linguopoetic tool that reveals their worldview, level of thinking, and intellectual potential.

Paradox is close in nature to such phenomena as aphorism, word play, and antinomian reasoning⁴. At the same time, it also has certain common features with irony and oxymoron. All of these phenomena go beyond the boundaries of traditional logic and conventional ideas and serve to interpret reality from an unusual perspective⁵. However, an important difference between paradox and oxymoron is that the understanding of its content is often not strongly dependent on context or intonation. Paradoxical thought often retains a certain semantic integrity even independently and can be understood by the reader or listener. Both paradox and oxymoron arise as a product of the individual thinking of the author or speaker. However, paradox, as a rule, by putting forward a certain idea or judgment, opposes existing views and seeks to substantiate a new truth. Oxymoron, on the other hand, creates a new figurative content through the syntactic combination of units with opposite meanings. Therefore, if the paradox

³ Литературная энциклопедия / гл. редактор А.В. Луначарский. – М.: ОГИЗ, РСФСР, 1934. – Т.8. – С. 271.

⁴ Большая советская энциклопедия. – М.: Государственное изд-во «Совет. эн-циклопед.», ОГИЗ, РСФСР, 1939. – Т.43.; Большая советская энциклопедия. – М.: Сов. энциклопед. – 3-е изд., 1974. – Т. 18.

⁵ Литературная энциклопедия / гл. редактор А.В. Луначарский. – М.: ОГИЗ, РСФСР, 1934. – Т.8. – С. 271.

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is based on a logical-philosophical contradiction, then in oxymoron semantic-aesthetic harmony is the priority.

The commonalities and differences between oxymoron and paradox can be clarified through the following aspects.

First, both phenomena have an individual character, and their artistic value is determined by the uniqueness of the author's thinking. However, a paradox can be true or false from a logical point of view⁶. The value of a paradoxical thought depends on how it is interpreted and justified. In oxymoron, the category of truth or falsehood is not important. In it, the main attention is paid to the new semantic and aesthetic content that arises as a result of the interaction of opposing concepts.

If oxymoron is formed on the basis of a semantic relationship between opposing concepts, then paradox seeks to reveal the internal logic of a seemingly incompatible thought or judgment. Therefore, paradox preserves the existing contradiction, while oxymoron transforms this contradiction into an aesthetic whole.

Secondly, the linguistic nature of paradox and oxymoron indicates the presence of certain points of intersection in their semantic fields. Both phenomena deviate from the usual norms of language use and traditional semantic connections. At the same time, their structural organization also has some similarities. However, while paradox is mainly manifested in a system of judgments and reasoning, oxymoron is formed more on the basis of semantic opposition between lexical and syntactic units.

Thirdly, the thoughts or concepts contained in the paradox enter into a mutually negative relationship. The purpose of the paradox is often to question generally accepted views or to put forward an idea opposite to them⁷. In oxymoron, although the components are semantically opposite, they do not negate each

⁶ Литературная энциклопедия / гл. редактор А.В. Луначарский. – М.: ОГИЗ, РСФСР, 1934. – Т.8. – С. 271.

⁷ Большая советская энциклопедия. – М.: Государственное изд-во «Совет. эн-циклопед.», ОГИЗ, РСФСР, 1939. – Т.43.; Большая советская энциклопедия. – М.: Сов. энциклопед. – 3-е изд., 1974. – Т. 18.

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other. On the contrary, as a result of their interaction, a new and holistic artistic image arises.

Therefore, the essence of oxymoron is not in preserving the contradiction, but in transforming it into an aesthetic unity. Paradox, on the other hand, preserves the contradiction as a logical-philosophical problem and encourages the reader to reflect on this contradiction.

In conclusion, there is a certain commonality between paradox and oxymoron, they are brought together by such features as contradiction, anomaly, unusualness, and departure from traditional norms. However, interpreting these phenomena as one concept is not scientifically justified. Because their structural-semantic nature and linguopoetic functions differ from each other.

If oxymoron is a stylistic device that creates a new figurative content as a result of the syntactic combination of units with opposite meanings, then paradox is a logical-philosophical phenomenon aimed at putting forward and substantiating an idea or judgment that contradicts existing views. Therefore, it is appropriate to study them as interconnected, but independent linguopoetic devices.

Conclusion

The conducted analysis demonstrates that oxymoron and paradox occupy an important place among linguopoetic means based on contradiction. Although both phenomena arise through the interaction of opposing concepts and violate conventional expectations, they differ substantially in their linguistic nature and communicative purposes.

Oxymoron functions primarily as a syntactic-stylistic device. Through the combination of semantically incompatible units within a single construction, it transforms contradiction into an aesthetic whole and creates a new figurative meaning. Its main purpose is to intensify imagery, enhance expressiveness, and convey complex emotional and conceptual content.

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Paradox, by contrast, operates predominantly at the level of judgments and reasoning. Rather than eliminating contradiction, it preserves and problematizes it, encouraging readers to reconsider established truths and reflect critically upon reality. Consequently, paradox serves as both an intellectual and philosophical instrument of artistic expression.

The study confirms that interpreting oxymoron merely as a subtype of paradox oversimplifies their distinctive characteristics. Despite their shared semantic basis, their structural organization, mechanisms of meaning production, and aesthetic functions remain fundamentally different.

Future research may further investigate the manifestation of these phenomena across different genres and languages, thereby contributing to the development of comparative linguistics and stylistic theory.

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