A COGNITIVE-DISCURSIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FEMALE CONCEPT IN THE WORKS OF MARGARET DRABBLE AND O‘TKIR HOSHIMOV

Axmedjanova Farida Djavairovna
Teacher at Institute of Foreign Languages
axmedjanovafarida@gmail.com

Abstract: This article presents a cognitive-discursive comparative analysis of the female concept in the works of Margaret Drabble and O‘tkir Hoshimov. Drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks from cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, and feminist literary theory, the study examines how female identity is constructed through narrative structure, linguistic strategies, and conceptual metaphors. The findings reveal that while Drabble emphasizes introspective, psychologically complex representations of female subjectivity, Hoshimov foregrounds socially embedded and culturally grounded portrayals. The comparison highlights both universal and culture-specific aspects of the female concept, demonstrating that identity is a dynamic and discursively mediated construct shaped by cognitive and socio-cultural factors.

Keywords: female concept; cognitive-discursive analysis; Margaret Drabble; O‘tkir Hoshimov; female identity; discourse analysis; cognitive linguistics; conceptual metaphor; narrative structure; gender representation

The representation of the female concept in twentieth-century literature reflects a profound intersection of cultural, cognitive, and discursive forces that shape both individual identity and collective perception. In both Western and Central Asian literary traditions, the depiction of women undergoes a significant transformation from static, socially prescribed roles toward more complex, psychologically nuanced constructions of subjectivity. Margaret Drabble and O‘tkir Hoshimov, despite belonging to distinct cultural and literary environments, present remarkably rich and multifaceted portrayals of women that invite comparative analysis. While Drabble’s works are often associated with introspective, psychologically oriented narratives that foreground individual consciousness, Hoshimov’s prose tends to emphasize social embeddedness, moral resilience, and cultural continuity. A cognitive-discursive approach allows for a deeper understanding of how these differing representations emerge through language, narrative structure, and conceptual frameworks, revealing that the female concept is not merely a thematic element but a dynamic construct shaped by both mental processes and discursive practices.

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of identity has been reconceptualized in contemporary scholarship as fluid, processual, and discursively constructed. As Hall (2000) argues, identity is not an inherent essence but a “production” that is continuously formed within representation. This view is further supported by cognitive approaches to meaning, which emphasize that conceptual structures arise from embodied experience and mental modeling (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Fauconnier, 1997). In literary texts, these processes are reflected in the ways characters perceive, interpret, and narrate their own experiences. In Drabble’s works, such as *The Waterfall* and *The Millstone*, female subjectivity is constructed through introspective narration, internal monologue, and shifting perspectives, which foreground the cognitive processes underlying identity formation. By contrast, Hoshimov’s narratives, particularly in *Dunyoning ishlari* and *Ikki eshik orasida*, rely more heavily on social interaction, cultural symbolism, and

implicit psychological cues, suggesting that identity is shaped not only by internal reflection but also by collective experience and moral values.

A key distinction between the two authors lies in their treatment of psychological interiority. Drabble's female characters often engage in intense self-analysis, reflecting what cognitive narratology identifies as meta-representational awareness, where the mind observes and evaluates itself (Zunshine, 2006). For example, in *The Waterfall*, the protagonist's introspection frequently reveals a split between experiencing and observing self, as seen in passages that depict her watching her own emotions unfold from a distance. This linguistic construction indicates a layered consciousness, where identity is not unified but divided across multiple cognitive planes. The use of free indirect discourse and fragmented syntax further reinforces this effect, creating a sense of immediacy while simultaneously highlighting the instability of perception. In contrast, Hoshimov's portrayal of female psychology is more implicit, conveyed through external behavior, silence, and nonverbal cues. Characters such as Qora Amma embody emotional depth not through explicit introspection but through subtle gestures, pauses, and symbolic actions. This aligns with discourse-based theories of meaning, which emphasize that communication often relies on what is unsaid as much as on what is articulated (Fairclough, 2001).

The linguistic representation of the female concept in these works also reveals significant differences in discursive strategy. Drabble's language is characterized by abstraction, metaphorical density, and syntactic complexity, reflecting a focus on individual cognition and emotional nuance. Conceptual metaphors play a central role in structuring her narratives, particularly in the depiction of female desire and identity. For instance, the metaphor of the "waterfall" in *The Waterfall* encodes emotion as an uncontrollable natural force, suggesting that identity is shaped by experiences that exceed rational control. This corresponds to the conceptual mapping EMOTION IS A NATURAL FORCE (Kövecses, 2002), which frames the protagonist's inner world as dynamic and unstable. In Hoshimov's works, by contrast, metaphors are often grounded in everyday life and cultural experience, reflecting a more collective and socially oriented conception of identity. The female concept is frequently associated with images of home, family, and continuity, which function as culturally embedded schemas that structure both narrative and meaning.

Another important dimension of comparison is the role of discourse in shaping gender identity. In Drabble's texts, female subjectivity is constructed through a constant negotiation between personal desire and societal expectation, reflecting the influence of feminist discourse and the changing roles of women in Western society. The protagonist's internal conflicts often arise from the tension between autonomy and conformity, highlighting the performative nature of gender as described by Butler (2004). Linguistically, this tension is expressed through modal verbs, hedging, and evaluative language, which indicate uncertainty and self-reflection. In Hoshimov's narratives, gender identity is more closely tied to cultural norms and ethical values, with female characters often embodying ideals of patience, resilience, and moral strength. However, this does not imply a lack of complexity; rather, it suggests a different mode of representation, where identity is constructed through social roles and relational dynamics rather than individual introspection.

The cognitive-discursive framework also highlights the importance of narrative structure in shaping the female concept. Drabble's nonlinear, fragmented narratives reflect the workings of memory and consciousness, emphasizing the subjective nature of experience. This aligns with cognitive theories of narrative, which view storytelling as a process of organizing and interpreting events (Bruner, 2004). Hoshimov's narratives, on the other hand, tend to follow a more linear

structure, reflecting a focus on causality and social context. However, within this structure, moments of psychological depth are conveyed through carefully selected details and symbolic imagery, demonstrating that cognitive complexity can be achieved through different narrative strategies.

Despite these differences, both authors share a commitment to portraying women as complex, evolving subjects rather than static figures. In both Drabble and Hoshimov, the female concept is characterized by tension and transformation, reflecting broader social and cultural changes. While Drabble emphasizes internal conflict and cognitive fragmentation, Hoshimov highlights resilience and continuity, suggesting that identity is shaped by both personal and collective forces. This convergence underscores the universality of certain aspects of female experience, even as cultural differences shape their expression.

In conclusion, a cognitive-discursive comparative analysis of the female concept in the works of Margaret Drabble and O‘tkir Hoshimov reveals the intricate interplay between language, cognition, and culture in shaping literary representations of identity. By examining the linguistic, narrative, and conceptual strategies employed by each author, it becomes clear that the female concept is not a fixed or homogeneous entity but a dynamic construct that reflects both individual experience and socio-cultural context. This approach not only deepens our understanding of the two authors’ works but also contributes to broader discussions on the nature of identity in literature, demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary methodologies in literary analysis.

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