

INVESTIGATIVE DISCOURSE AND THE POETICS OF DEDUCTION: A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF O'LMAS UMARBKOV'S FOTIMA VA ZUHRA
AND ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S THE SPECKLED BAND

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Abstract. This article examines the poetics of investigation in O'lmas Umarbekov's Fotima va Zuhra and Arthur Conan Doyle's The Speckled Band through a comparative discourse analysis. The study focuses on the artistic organization of crime investigation and mystery resolution, the presentation and interpretation of evidence, the formation of suspicion and hypotheses, the construction of the investigator figure, and the role of logical inference in narrative development. Particular attention is also paid to the narrative and linguopoetic devices employed to construct investigative discourse, including dialogue, description, repetition, contrast, suspense, and the gradual distribution of information. The findings demonstrate that Doyle primarily constructs investigation according to a deductive and logical model, whereas Umarbekov expands the investigative process through social and psychological dimensions. Despite these differences, both authors employ the conventions of detective fiction to involve readers in the search for hidden truth and in the reinterpretation of apparently unrelated events.

Keywords: detective fiction, poetics of investigation, comparative discourse analysis, investigator figure, evidence, deduction, suspense, narrative strategy, linguopoetics, mystery.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada O'lmas Umarbekovning "Fotima va Zuhra" romani hamda Artur Konan Doylning "The Speckled Band" hikoyasida detektiv tergov poetikasining o'ziga xos xususiyatlari qiyosiy diskurs tahlili asosida tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotda jinoyatni aniqlash va sirni ochish jarayonining badiiy tashkil etilishi, dalillarning taqdim qilinishi, gumon va taxminlarning shakllanishi, tergovchi obrazining yaratilishi hamda voqealar rivojida mantiqiy xulosaning o'rni tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, har ikki asarda tergov jarayonini shakllantiruvchi narrativ va lingvopoetik vositalar, jumladan, dialog, tasvir, takror, kontrast, suspense va axborotni bosqichma-bosqich taqdim etish usullari qiyoslanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari Doyl asarida tergov asosan deduktiv-mantiqiy model asosida qurilishini, Umarbekov asarida esa tergov jarayoni ijtimoiy va psixologik omillar bilan kengaytirilishini ko'rsatadi. Shu bilan birga, har ikki muallif detektiv janrining asosiy tamoyillaridan foydalangan holda o'quvchini yashirin haqiqatni izlash va voqealarni qayta talqin qilish jarayoniga jalb etadi.

Kalit so'zlar: detektiv adabiyot, tergov poetikasi, qiyosiy diskurs tahlili, tergovchi obrazi, dalil, deduksiya, suspense, narrativ strategiya, lingvopoetika, sir.

Аннотация. В данной статье на основе сравнительного дискурсивного анализа исследуются особенности поэтики расследования в романе Ольмаса Умарбекова «Фатима и Зухра» и рассказе Артура Конан Дойла «The Speckled Band». Основное внимание уделяется художественной организации процесса расследования преступления и раскрытия тайны, представлению доказательств, формированию подозрений и предположений, созданию образа расследователя и роли логического вывода в развитии сюжета. Сопоставляются также нарративные и лингвопоэтические средства, посредством которых формируется дискурс расследования, включая диалог, описание, повтор, контраст, саспенс и постепенное раскрытие информации. Результаты исследования показывают, что в произведении Дойла расследование преимущественно строится на

дедуктивно-логической модели, тогда как у Умарбекова оно расширяется за счёт социальных и психологических факторов. Оба автора, используя основные принципы детективного жанра, вовлекают читателя в процесс поиска скрытой истины и переосмысления событий.

Ключевые слова: детективная литература, поэтика расследования, сравнительный дискурсивный анализ, образ расследователя, доказательство, дедукция, саспенс, нарративная стратегия, лингвопоэтика, тайна.

Introduction. Detective fiction is one of the literary genres in which the process of investigation constitutes the central mechanism of narrative development. The genre is traditionally organized around a mysterious event, usually a crime, followed by a process through which concealed information is gradually reconstructed. Unlike narratives in which events are presented chronologically and transparently, detective fiction deliberately creates an informational gap between the occurrence of an event and the discovery of its causes. This gap generates suspense and encourages the reader to participate in the interpretation of clues, evidence, and character behaviour. Consequently, investigation in detective fiction should be understood not simply as a thematic element but as a particular mode of narrative organization and discourse. The classical structure of detective fiction has been extensively discussed by literary theorists. Tzvetan Todorov, in his influential discussion of detective fiction, distinguishes between the story of the crime and the story of the investigation.¹ The first concerns the events that have already taken place, while the second reconstructs those events through the investigative process.² This distinction is particularly important for understanding the poetics of deduction because the reader encounters the crime retrospectively. The investigator must reconstruct a sequence of events from incomplete and apparently disconnected pieces of information. The process of reconstruction is closely connected with deduction. In classical detective fiction, deduction refers to the movement from observed details toward a logical explanation. Evidence itself does not automatically provide truth; rather, it becomes meaningful when the investigator establishes connections between individual clues. John G. Cawelti observes that detective narratives derive much of their distinctive appeal from the intellectual process through which a mystery is gradually transformed into an intelligible explanation.³ Thus, the detective's ability to interpret information becomes one of the principal sources of narrative tension. Arthur Conan Doyle played a fundamental role in establishing this model through the figure of Sherlock Holmes. Holmes represents the investigator as an analytical observer whose principal strength lies in his ability to notice details and establish relationships that remain invisible to other characters. His investigative method is particularly evident in *The Speckled Band*, in which a seemingly inexplicable death is gradually explained through the interpretation of physical evidence and the reconstruction of the criminal mechanism. O'ltmas Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra*, although belonging to a different literary and cultural tradition, also employs detective conventions in constructing its narrative. The work combines criminal investigation with psychological, social, and adventure elements. The investigation develops through the gradual discovery of information concerning criminal events, relationships among characters, motives, and hidden circumstances. Consequently, Umarbekov's investigative discourse differs from Doyle's more concentrated deductive model while still sharing its fundamental principle: truth must be reconstructed from fragmented information. The comparison of these works is particularly valuable because it demonstrates how the conventions of detective fiction can be adapted to different narrative systems. Doyle's *The Speckled Band* represents a relatively

¹ Todorov, Tzvetan. "The Typology of Detective Fiction." In: *The Poetics of Prose*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977. P. 42–52.

³ Cawelti, John G. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

compact classical detective structure in which physical clues and logical deduction dominate the investigation. Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra*, by contrast, presents investigation within a broader network of characters, events, motives, and social relationships. The difference between these approaches provides an opportunity to examine how investigative discourse functions at both linguistic and narrative levels. The concept of investigative discourse in this study refers to the linguistic and narrative organization through which a crime, mystery, or hidden event is investigated. It includes questioning, answering, description, testimony, hypothesis formation, interpretation of clues, accusation, denial, and final explanation. The discourse of investigation therefore involves both the language used by characters and the narrative strategies through which information is distributed to the reader. The poetics of deduction, meanwhile, concerns the artistic representation of the movement from uncertainty toward logical explanation. It includes the construction of clues, the sequencing of evidence, the creation of hypotheses, the concealment and revelation of information, and the representation of the investigator's reasoning. These elements determine how readers experience the mystery and how they participate in its solution. The aim of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of investigative discourse and the poetics of deduction in O'limas Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra* and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band*. Particular attention is given to the construction of the investigator figure, the presentation and interpretation of evidence, the role of deduction, the function of dialogue, the distribution of information, suspense, and the final revelation of truth. The novelty of the study lies in examining the two works not simply as examples of detective fiction but as different models of investigative discourse. While Doyle constructs investigation predominantly through physical clues and deductive reasoning, Umarbekov develops a more multidimensional investigative structure in which evidence is connected with characters, relationships, motives, and social circumstances. The comparison therefore demonstrates how a common detective framework can produce different forms of investigative narration. Detective fiction is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between mystery and explanation. The mystery creates a temporary state of uncertainty, while the investigation provides the process through which uncertainty is gradually reduced. This structure distinguishes detective fiction from many other forms of crime narrative. According to Todorov, the classical detective story contains two interconnected narratives: the narrative of the crime and the narrative of the investigation.⁴ The crime narrative is usually concealed from the reader, while the investigation reconstructs it retrospectively. This dual structure creates a distinctive temporal organization. The investigator investigates the past, but the reader experiences the reconstruction in the present of the narrative. The investigator consequently performs an epistemological function. He or she transforms scattered information into knowledge. This process can be represented as: Each stage contributes to the development of investigative discourse. A mystery creates a question; observation produces information; a clue gives that information potential significance; a hypothesis establishes a possible explanation; deduction tests the relationship between clues; and the final explanation reconstructs the hidden event. Cawelti emphasizes the importance of intellectual discovery in mystery fiction. The reader is attracted not only by the question of who committed a crime but also by the process through which the answer can be logically established. This is why detective fiction often invites readers to formulate their own hypotheses. The role of the reader is particularly significant in relation to the distribution of information. If the author revealed all relevant information immediately, the mystery would disappear. Conversely, if the reader received no meaningful clues, the final solution would appear arbitrary. Successful detective fiction therefore maintains a balance between concealment and revelation. Umberto Eco's discussion of the reader is also relevant to this process. Literary texts require readers to perform interpretative work, and detective fiction makes this activity particularly explicit. The reader becomes an active participant in constructing possible meanings from textual evidence. Investigative discourse is consequently both narrative and communicative. Characters

⁴ Todorov, Tzvetan. "The Typology of Detective Fiction." In: *The Poetics of Prose*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977. P. 42–52.

ask questions, provide answers, conceal information, contradict one another, and make accusations. At the same time, the narrator controls what the reader knows and when that knowledge becomes available. This dual level is particularly visible in the relationship between Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. Watson frequently provides the narrative perspective, while Holmes possesses superior interpretative knowledge. The reader therefore receives information through Watson but must wait for Holmes's interpretation to understand its full significance. The present study employs a comparative discourse-analytical methodology supported by narratological and linguopoetic approaches. The analysis focuses on two primary literary texts: O'lmas Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra* and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band*. The comparative approach is based on the assumption that detective fiction possesses recurring structural features, but these features can be transformed according to the author's narrative strategy and cultural context. Therefore, the purpose is not to determine which work represents a "better" detective model but to identify the similarities and differences in their construction of investigative discourse. Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band* provides a particularly clear example of classical deductive investigation. The narrative begins with Helen Stoner's visit to Sherlock Holmes and her account of the mysterious circumstances surrounding her sister Julia's death. The central mystery is immediately established through uncertainty concerning Julia's final words and the circumstances of her death. The narrative initially encourages several possible interpretations. The event appears strange and potentially inexplicable. However, Holmes approaches it as a problem that can be solved through observation and logical reasoning. The first important characteristic of Holmes's investigative method is his attention to physical details. He examines the environment rather than accepting the characters' interpretations of events. Objects that initially seem unrelated become meaningful when considered within the context of the investigation. The ventilator, bell-rope, bed, and other elements of the room are particularly important. Their arrangement enables Holmes to reconstruct the mechanism of the crime.⁵ The significance of these objects emerges gradually. Their individual existence is not enough; Holmes must identify the functional relationship between them. The narrative uses this spatial dimension to create suspense. The reader encounters unusual objects before understanding their purpose. The eventual explanation retrospectively changes their meaning. This technique produces a significant effect: the reader realizes that the clues were present from the beginning but were not correctly interpreted. The mystery therefore results not from a complete absence of information but from the inability to organize information correctly. Sherlock Holmes is one of the most influential investigator figures in detective fiction. His characterization is closely connected with observation, logic, and intellectual discipline. Holmes differs from ordinary observers because he treats seemingly insignificant details as potentially meaningful. His investigative superiority is based on interpretation rather than simple perception. This distinction is crucial. Many characters can see the same object, but Holmes understands its significance. The difference between seeing and interpreting becomes the foundation of his authority as a detective. His discourse also reflects this analytical identity. Holmes frequently speaks in the language of probability, inference, evidence, and causality. His explanations reconstruct relationships between facts rather than simply presenting conclusions. Dr Watson's role strengthens this characterization. Watson frequently records events without understanding their complete significance. His narrative perspective creates a contrast between ordinary perception and Holmesian interpretation. The Holmes-Watson relationship can therefore be understood as a discourse of unequal knowledge: The distinction between a clue and evidence is important in detective discourse. A clue is an element that may contribute to solving a mystery, while evidence becomes significant when its relationship to the crime has been established. O'lmas Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra* employs detective conventions within a broader narrative framework. The work contains criminal events and investigative processes, but the investigation develops through a larger network of characters, motives, relationships, and

⁵ Doyle, Arthur Conan. "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." In: *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. London: George Newnes, 1892.

circumstances. Unlike Doyle's highly concentrated mystery, Umarbekov's narrative gives greater space to the development of characters and the consequences of criminal activity. The reader therefore encounters evidence not only through physical objects but also through behaviour, dialogue, relationships, and testimony. The investigator figure in *Fotima va Zuhra* is represented through a legal and institutional framework. Major Qodirjon Aliyev's investigative role is associated with the identification of criminal activity and the reconstruction of events.⁶ Unlike Holmes, whose authority derives primarily from extraordinary analytical intelligence, Aliyev's authority is connected with professional responsibility and investigative experience. This difference is reflected in their investigative discourse. Holmes frequently operates through individual observation and deduction. Aliyev operates within a broader investigative structure involving information gathering, questioning, examination of circumstances, and the reconstruction of relationships. The two investigators nevertheless share an important characteristic: both reject superficial explanations. Holmes searches for the hidden mechanism behind an apparently mysterious event. Aliyev searches for the hidden connections behind apparently separate criminal events.

The difference can therefore be expressed as follows:

Aspect	Sherlock Holmes	Major Qodirjon Aliyev
Primary authority	Intellectual ability	Professional/institutional authority
Main method	Deduction	Investigation and analysis
Evidence	Physical clues	Events, testimony, relationships, circumstances
Narrative function	Solve a mystery	Reconstruct criminal circumstances
Dominant discourse	Analytical	Investigative and institutional

The comparison demonstrates that the investigator figure is adapted to the narrative structure of each work. Dialogue is one of the most important linguistic mechanisms through which investigation is represented. In *The Speckled Band*, Holmes's questions are usually purposeful. He asks for specific information and uses the answers to test possible explanations. Dialogue therefore functions as an instrument of information extraction. Watson's interaction with Helen Stoner also contributes to the presentation of the mystery.⁷ Her account provides the initial narrative evidence from which Holmes begins his investigation. In *Fotima va Zuhra*, dialogue performs a wider range of functions. It communicates information, establishes interpersonal relationships, reveals emotional states, and contributes to characterization. From a discourse perspective, investigative questioning can be divided into several functions:

1. information-seeking questions;
2. clarification questions;
3. verification questions;
4. accusatory questions;
5. rhetorical questions;
6. questions designed to expose contradictions.

These functions allow dialogue to become an investigative instrument. The difference between the two works lies primarily in the density of social and psychological information carried by dialogue. Doyle's conversations are often directly connected with the mystery, whereas Umarbekov's dialogues may simultaneously contribute to plot development and character psychology. Suspense is closely connected with the management of information. A detective narrative must provide sufficient information to make the solution meaningful while

⁶ Umarbekov, O'lmas. *Fotima va Zuhra*. Toshkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi, 2005.

⁷ Chandler, Raymond. "The Simple Art of Murder." *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1944.

withholding enough information to preserve uncertainty. In *The Speckled Band*, suspense develops through mysterious details, Helen Stoner's testimony, and the strange physical characteristics of the crime scene. The reader receives clues but does not immediately understand their significance. Doyle's method can be described as delayed semantic clarification: information is provided before its meaning is fully explained. Umarbekov uses a broader form of suspense. Information concerning characters, relationships, motives, and events is gradually connected. The reader therefore experiences uncertainty not only about the identity or actions of particular characters but also about the relationships between different events. In *Fotima va Zuhra*, recurring references to criminal events, character relationships, and suspicious circumstances help maintain the investigative thread. Description also performs an investigative function. In Doyle's story, spatial description becomes evidence. In Umarbekov's narrative, descriptions of characters and situations can provide information about behaviour and relationships. Therefore, linguopoetic devices in detective fiction are functional rather than merely ornamental. They guide attention, organize information, and influence interpretation. The comparative analysis demonstrates that both works use investigation as the central mechanism through which hidden information becomes meaningful. Nevertheless, their investigative models differ in emphasis.

The following distinction can be made:

Category	The Speckled Band	Fotima va Zuhra
Investigative model	Deductive	Multidimensional
Main source of clues	Physical environment	Events, people, testimony, circumstances
Investigator	Independent analytical detective	Institutional investigator
Role of dialogue	Information gathering	Information + characterization
Suspense	Mystery and physical clues	Events, relationships and motives
Deduction	Central	Important but integrated with broader investigation
Revelation	Criminal mechanism	Criminal connections and circumstances

Doyle's investigative discourse is highly concentrated. Every significant detail tends to contribute to the final solution. This creates an almost mathematical relationship between clue and explanation. Umarbekov's model is more expansive. The investigation develops through a network of social and psychological information. Consequently, the reader must perform a more complex interpretative task. This does not make one model superior to the other. Rather, they demonstrate two different possibilities within detective poetics. Doyle demonstrates the power of deductive concentration, whereas Umarbekov demonstrates the potential of investigative expansion.

Conclusion. The comparative analysis of O'limas Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra* and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band* demonstrates that investigative discourse is a flexible narrative mechanism capable of assuming different forms within detective fiction. In Doyle's story, investigation is constructed predominantly through observation, physical evidence, deductive reasoning, and the gradual reinterpretation of clues. Sherlock Holmes represents the analytical investigator whose authority derives from his ability to transform apparently insignificant details into a coherent explanation. The narrative's suspense depends on the controlled distribution of information and the delayed revelation of the significance of clues. Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra*, while employing similar detective conventions, develops a broader investigative discourse. Evidence is not restricted to physical objects; it also emerges through testimony, dialogue, behaviour, relationships, motives, and circumstances. The

investigator therefore reconstructs not only the mechanism of a crime but also the connections among the people and events involved. The comparison demonstrates that deduction remains an essential principle in both works, but its function differs. In *The Speckled Band*, deduction is the dominant method through which the mystery is solved. In *Fotima va Zuhra*, deduction operates within a wider investigative process that incorporates social and psychological information. The analysis also shows that dialogue, description, repetition, contrast, and information management play important roles in constructing investigative discourse. These linguistic and narrative devices control the reader's access to information and create the movement from uncertainty to explanation. Ultimately, both works demonstrate that detective fiction depends upon a fundamental transformation: fragmented information becomes meaningful through interpretation. Doyle achieves this transformation through the highly concentrated deductive method of Sherlock Holmes, while Umarbekov achieves it through a broader investigative structure involving characters, relationships, events, and motives. The comparative study therefore confirms that the poetics of deduction is not a rigid formula. It is a flexible literary strategy that can be adapted to different narrative structures and cultural contexts. The comparison of *Fotima va Zuhra* and *The Speckled Band* reveals two distinct but interconnected models of detective discourse: the classical model of deductive reconstruction and the broader model of socially and psychologically embedded investigation.

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