

**SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SYNONYMS IN ENGLISH
AND UZBEK LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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Abstract: *This article examines the phenomenon of synonymy in English and Uzbek languages within the framework of comparative linguistics. Although synonyms are traditionally understood as words with similar meanings, their semantic, stylistic, and pragmatic nuances vary across languages. The study explores types of synonyms, their degrees of similarity, and contextual restrictions in both languages. It argues that synonymy is not absolute but relative, shaped by cultural, historical, and linguistic factors. Examples from both English and Uzbek demonstrate how lexical choice reflects the speaker's intention, emotional tone, and situational appropriateness.*

Keywords: *synonymy, semantics, comparative linguistics, lexical meaning, stylistic nuance, English, Uzbek.*

Аннотация: *В статье рассматривается явление синонимии в английском и узбекском языках с точки зрения сопоставительного языкознания. Показано, что хотя синонимы традиционно понимаются как слова с близким значением, они различаются по семантическим оттенкам, стилю и употреблению. Сравнительный анализ выявляет, что синонимия является относительным, а не абсолютным явлением, зависящим от культурных и языковых факторов.*

Ключевые слова: *синонимия, семантика, сопоставительное языкознание, лексическое значение, стилистические различия, английский язык, узбекский язык.*

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi sinonimiya hodisasi qiyosiy tilshunoslik nuqtai nazaridan o'rganiladi. Sinonimlar odatda bir xil ma'noga ega so'zlar sifatida qaralsa-da, ularning semantik va uslubiy farqlari mavjud. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, sinonimiya mutlaq emas, balki nisbiy hodisa bo'lib, u madaniy va til xususiyatlari bilan belgilanadi. Ingliz va o'zbek tillaridan olingan misollar sinonim tanlovi nutq maqsadi va kontekst bilan chambarchas bog'liqligini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: sinonimiya, semantika, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, leksik ma'no, uslubiy farq, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili.

1. Introduction

Synonymy — the existence of different words with similar meanings — is one of the central issues in semantics and comparative linguistics. No language can be considered to have absolute synonyms, as even words with close meanings differ in their connotations, stylistic coloring, or contextual usage.

For example, in English, begin and commence both mean “to start,” but commence is more formal. Similarly, in Uzbek, boshlamoq and kirishmoq convey a similar meaning, but kirishmoq often implies enthusiasm or active engagement.

Comparing synonymy across languages helps reveal how semantic distinctions reflect cultural and psychological features of speakers.

2. Types of Synonyms in English and Uzbek

According to Ginzburg (1979) and Yuldasheva (2020), synonyms can be divided into several types:

Absolute (complete) synonyms – rare in both languages; e.g., sofa – couch (English), ilm – ma'rifat (Uzbek).

Partial (relative) synonyms – the most common type, differing in shades of meaning or stylistic register:

to look – to gaze – to stare (English)

qaramoq – tikilmoq – boqmoq (Uzbek).

Stylistic synonyms – differ in emotional or stylistic coloring:

child – kid – youngster (English)

bola – farzand – go‘dak (Uzbek).

Contextual synonyms – acquire similar meaning only in specific contexts:

He is clever / He is smart; U aqlli / U ziyrak.

While both languages have developed rich synonymic systems, English tends to have more register-based differences (formal vs informal), whereas Uzbek shows more emotionally colored distinctions.

3. Semantic and Cultural Aspects of Synonymy

Semantic distinctions among synonyms often depend on cultural worldview and linguistic tradition.

For instance, the English pair freedom – liberty reflects historical influences of Anglo-Saxon and Latin origin, while in Uzbek, ozodlik – erkinlik have similar meanings but differ in usage: ozodlik is used in political contexts, whereas erkinlik often refers to personal or moral freedom.

In many cases, Uzbek synonyms carry national-cultural connotations, shaped by collective experience. For example, dono – aqlli – farosatli differ not only semantically but also reflect moral evaluation — dono implies wisdom acquired through life experience.

English synonyms, on the other hand, often differ according to register and style, influenced by the coexistence of Anglo-Saxon and Latin/French lexical layers.

4. Comparative Observations

The comparative analysis of synonymy in English and Uzbek reveals that the development of synonymous systems in both languages is closely related to their historical evolution, lexical sources, and cultural influences.

First, regarding the origin of synonymy, English synonymy has largely developed through lexical borrowing. Many synonymous pairs in English, such as help – assist, ask – inquire, and begin – commence, come from different historical layers of the language—namely Anglo-Saxon, French, and Latin. In contrast, Uzbek synonymy is primarily based on native derivation and semantic expansion, often formed through internal linguistic resources and folk expression. For example,

yordam bermoq, ko'maklashmoq, and qo'l uzatmoq all express the concept of "helping" but differ in emotional coloring and usage.

Second, in terms of stylistic range, English synonyms typically reflect a contrast between formal and informal registers. For instance, assist is formal, while help is neutral or informal. Uzbek synonyms, on the other hand, tend to differ across literary, poetic, and colloquial styles. The expression yordam bermoq is stylistically neutral, whereas qo'l uzatmoq is more figurative and expressive, often used in spoken or artistic language.

Third, absolute synonyms are extremely rare in both languages. Even pairs like sofa – couch in English or ilm – ma'rifat in Uzbek, which are nearly identical in meaning, differ slightly in connotation and context of use.

Fourth, cultural influence plays an essential role in shaping synonymic systems. In English, synonymy reflects the historical stratification of vocabulary and the coexistence of different lexical layers. In Uzbek, however, synonymy often carries emotional and evaluative connotations, reflecting moral and cultural values. For instance, dono, aqlli, and farosatli all mean "wise" or "intelligent," but dono implies wisdom gained through life experience and carries a tone of respect.

Finally, in terms of discourse function, English synonyms are frequently used for precision, politeness, and stylistic variation, whereas Uzbek synonyms serve to enhance expressiveness, emotional impact, and emphasis.

Thus, both languages demonstrate that synonymy enriches communication by allowing speakers to convey subtle semantic and stylistic distinctions. However, the motivation for using synonyms and the nuances they express are shaped by each language's unique historical and cultural background.

5. Conclusion

The comparative study of synonymy in English and Uzbek confirms that synonymy is a relational and context-dependent phenomenon. Despite their structural and historical differences, both languages use synonymy to express subtle shades of meaning, emotion, and style.

For linguists and translators, understanding these nuances is crucial, since

direct lexical equivalence rarely conveys the same pragmatic meaning. The findings emphasize the need for deeper semantic and cultural awareness in comparative and applied linguistics.

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