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LEXICOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF BEHAVIORAL VERBS CHARACTERIZED BY A UNIFIED SEMANTIC CORE

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Abstract

This article explores the lexicographic representation of behavioral verbs in the Uzbek language that are characterized by a unified semantic core. Behavioral verbs denote habitual or characteristic actions reflecting the subject's behavior and often exhibit semantic monosemy—a single, stable meaning across contexts. The study examines how Uzbek dictionaries represent these verbs, focusing on the adequacy and precision of semantic descriptions, morphological and syntactic information, and phrasal usage. Drawing on Uzbek linguistic scholarship and corpus data, the article highlights challenges and best practices in capturing behavioral verbs' semantic core in lexicographic works.

Keywords: Behavioral verbs, semantic core, monosemy, lexicographic representation, Uzbek language, verb semantics, dictionary description

1. Introduction

Behavioral verbs (*xulq-atvor fe'llari*) constitute a distinct semantic class of verbs that primarily describe habitual actions, mannerisms, or characteristic behaviors of subjects. These verbs serve as crucial linguistic tools that enable speakers to express not only external actions but also internal emotional states, dispositions, and social attitudes, thus bridging the cognitive and social dimensions of human

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behavior. Within the Uzbek language, behavioral verbs exhibit a unique semantic profile characterized by a unified semantic core, denoting a single, consistent meaning unaltered across diverse contexts. Linguistic analyses have identified this phenomenon as semantic monosemy, a property that simplifies semantic interpretation and supports effective communication (Komilov, 2003; Sobirov, 2015).

From a lexicographic perspective, representing behavioral verbs entails articulating their semantic essence clearly and comprehensively, along with their morphological and syntactic properties. Accurate dictionary descriptions are instrumental for a multitude of users—including language learners, researchers, translators, and educators—who rely on these resources to understand verb meanings and usage patterns. This article aims to critically examine existing lexicographic practices in Uzbek, focusing on how behavioral verbs are represented, the degree to which their unified semantic core is conveyed, and the challenges inherent in such representations.

2. Behavioral Verbs and Semantic Unity

Behavioral verbs in Uzbek predominantly denote recurrent or characteristic actions intimately linked to the subject's intrinsic behavior rather than external physical phenomena. Examples such as *kulmoq* (to laugh), *tikilmoq* (to stare), and *eshitmoq* (to hear) illustrate how these verbs encapsulate habitual or typical expressions of human behavior or sensory experience (Komilov, 2008). Their semantic unity—the property of maintaining one stable, well-defined meaning regardless of context—confers clarity and predictability, fundamental for both natural usage and lexicographic processing.

Semantic monosemy distinguishes behavioral verbs from more semantically complex, polysemous verbs that possess multiple disparate or related meanings (Sobirov, 2015). This property is particularly salient to lexicographers tasked with defining these verbs: it mandates precision to avoid ambiguous

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interpretations and ensures that dictionary entries do not conflate multiple senses, which could confuse users or misrepresent the verb's usage.

The clarity of behavioral verbs' semantic boundaries enables lexicographers to formulate concise, focused definitions that faithfully capture the habitual or characteristic nature inherent to these actions. This is particularly essential in pedagogical or learner-oriented dictionaries where minimizing ambiguity fosters better acquisition outcomes. Moreover, stable meanings underpin consistent usage across different communicative contexts, thereby enhancing both native speaker fluency and the proficiency of Uzbek as a second language learners. Emphasizing the unified semantic core also provides a foundation for incorporating illustrative examples that illuminate typical usage scenarios, further supporting comprehension of pragmatic and cultural subtleties embedded within these verbs (Komilov, 2008; Sobirov, 2015).

3. Lexicographic Practices in Uzbek Dictionaries

3.1 Semantic Description

A thorough semantic description is the cornerstone of lexicographic work on behavioral verbs. Uzbek dictionaries tend to present behavioral verbs through succinct definitions that emphasize their habitual or characteristic dimensions. For example, entries for *kulmoq* typically read as “*biror nima yoki kimnidir quvontiruvchi yuz ifodasini chiqarish*” (to show a facial expression indicating joy), encapsulating the core meaning without digression into figurative or secondary senses (Komilov, 2008).

Effective lexicographic representation goes beyond mere definitional shorthand; it integrates illustrative usage examples that situate the verb within relatable communicative contexts. Such examples not only reinforce the core semantic concept but also preempt potential misinterpretations by showing practical applications (Sobirov, 2018). Some dictionaries additionally include notes on

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register or sociolinguistic appropriateness when relevant, further enriching the user's grasp of behavioral verb usage.

3.2 Morphological and Syntactic Information

Complementing semantic entries, Uzbek dictionaries customarily provide morphological paradigms that outline verb conjugation across tense, aspect, and person. Given the intransitive nature of most behavioral verbs, lexicographers also note their typical argument structure, which involves a single agent performing the action without a direct object (Islomov, 2012). Accurately documenting such morphological and syntactic features is essential for dictionary users to comprehend verb behavior within sentence structures and for correct grammatical application.

Furthermore, some lexicographic works comment briefly on aspectual nuances—such as habitual, durative, or inchoative aspects—that are prominent in behavioral verb usage. These annotations equip users with nuanced perspectives of verb semantics and enhance their practical command of Uzbek verbal forms.

4. Challenges in Lexicographic Representation

Despite the apparent semantic clarity of behavioral verbs, lexicographers face a variety of challenges. Limited physical space in printed dictionaries often constrains the possibility of elaborating on subtle pragmatic meanings or describing peripheral figurative uses (Sobirov, 2015). Behavioral verbs may occasionally exhibit metaphorical extensions or culturally embedded connotations that standard dictionary definitions struggle to capture concisely. Moreover, behavioral verbs frequently participate less in phraseological or idiomatic expressions compared to other verb classes, which might reduce the richness of lexical documentation. This scarcity of idiomatic data can limit the comprehensiveness of dictionary entries and potentially leave users without guidance on colloquial or extended uses.

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The diversity of potential dictionary users—from native speakers to non-native learners—poses an additional difficulty: lexicographers must balance technical accuracy with accessibility, tailoring entries that are informative yet comprehensible to their intended audience.

5. Recommendations for Improved Lexicographic Entries

To overcome these challenges and enhance the quality of Uzbek dictionaries in representing behavioral verbs, several recommendations are proposed:

Clear, Monosemous Definitions: Emphasize the habitual or characteristic nature of actions in concise, unambiguous definitions that reflect the verbs' semantic unity.

Usage Examples: Incorporate illustrative sentences demonstrating typical contexts, supporting users' understanding of pragmatic and cultural aspects without overwhelming the entry.

Morphological and Syntactic Annotations: Detail regular morphological inflections and specify argument structures to aid grammatical comprehension.

Contextual Notes: Where applicable, include brief remarks on pragmatic variations or limited metaphorical usages, ensuring that such nuances do not dilute the core semantic description (Komilov, 2008; Sobirov, 2018).

User-tailored Clarity: Differentiate dictionary editions by target audience, with more extensive entries for advanced users and simplified versions for language learners.

6. Conclusion

The lexicographic representation of behavioral verbs in Uzbek, characterized by a unified semantic core, reflects their monosemous nature and functional specificity. Clear, concise, and contextually supported dictionary entries are vital for enhancing user understanding, supporting linguistic competence, and facilitating language acquisition. While current dictionaries generally succeed in

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preserving semantic clarity, ongoing efforts to balance completeness with succinctness will further improve lexical resources. Attentive incorporation of morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic information will bolster the utility and pedagogical value of future Uzbek dictionaries, thereby enriching the descriptive and normative corpus of the language.

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