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### ANTONYMS - SEMANTIC AND COGNITIVE CLASSIFICATION OF THE CONCEPTS: ANTINOMY AND CONTRAST

Sadikova Bahora Maxmurovna

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages,

Faculty of Romano-Germanic Languages,

Senior Teacher of the Spanish and Italian Philology Department

E-mail: [bahorabonu@mail.ru](mailto:bahorabonu@mail.ru)

ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9357-6441>

#### Abstract

This paper explores the semantic and cognitive classification of antonyms, antinomy, and contrast in Italian and Uzbek. Antonymy, as a universal linguistic phenomenon, reflects how different culture's structure oppositional meanings. Drawing on theories from lexical semantics and cognitive linguistics, the study compares how Italian and Uzbek encode gradable, complementary, and relational oppositions. Antinomy and contrast are examined as broader conceptual processes revealing paradox and difference in thought and discourse. Using descriptive and comparative analysis based on dictionary and corpus data, the study shows that while antonymic patterns are universal, their cognitive and cultural interpretations vary, reflecting distinct linguistic worldviews.

**Keywords:** Antonymy; antinomy; contrast; semantic classification; cognitive linguistics; conceptual opposition.

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### АНТОНИМЫ – СЕМАНТИЧЕСКАЯ И КОГНИТИВНАЯ КЛАССИФИКАЦИЯ ПОНЯТИЙ: АНТИНОМИЯ И КОНТРАСТ

#### Аннотация

В статье рассматривается семантическая и когнитивная классификация антонимов, антиномии и контраста в итальянском и узбекском языках. Антонимия как универсальное лингвистическое явление отражает, как разные культуры структурируют значения противоположности. Основываясь на теориях лексической семантики и когнитивной лингвистики, исследование сравнивает, каким образом итальянский и узбекский языки кодируют градуальные, комплементарные и реляционные оппозиции. Антиномия и контраст рассматриваются как более широкие концептуальные процессы, раскрывающие парадокс и различие в мышлении и дискурсе. Используя описательный и сравнительный анализ на основе данных словарей и корпусов, исследование показывает, что, хотя антонимические модели являются универсальными, их когнитивные и культурные интерпретации различаются, отражая уникальные языковые картины мира.

**Ключевые слова:** антонимия; антиномия; контраст; семантическая классификация; когнитивная лингвистика; концептуальная оппозиция.

### ANTONIMLAR, ANTINOMLAR VA KONTRAST TUSHUNCHALARINING SEMANTIK VA KOGNITIV TASNIFI

#### Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada antonimlar, antinomiya va kontrast tushunchalarining semantik va kognitiv tasnifi (italyan va o'zbek tillari misolida) tahlil qilinadi. Antonimiya - universal til hodisasi sifatida - turli madaniyatlarning qarama-qarshi ma'nolarni

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qanday tuzishini aks ettirib, leksik semantika va kognitiv lingvistika nazariyalariga tayangan holda, tadqiqotda italyan va o‘zbek tillarida gradatsion, to‘ldiruvchi va munosabatli oppozitsiyalar qanday ifodalanishi solishtiriladi. Antinomiya va kontrast fikrlash va nutqdagi paradoks hamda farqlarni ochib beruvchi kengroq kontseptual jarayonlar sifatida ko‘rib chiqiladi. Lug‘atlar va korpus ma’lumotlariga asoslangan tavsifiy va qiyosiy tahlil orqali tadqiqot shuni ko‘rsatadiki, antonimik birliklar universallikka ega bo‘lsa-da, ularning kognitiv va madaniy talqinlari farqlanadi hamda turli til dunyoqarashlarini aks ettiradi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** antonimiya; antinomiya; kontrast; semantik tasnif; kognitiv lingvistika; kontseptual oppozitsiya.

### Introduction

Antonymy represents one of the most fundamental relations in language, revealing how speakers conceptualize difference, opposition, and balance. It functions not only as a lexical phenomenon but also as a cognitive and cultural tool for structuring human thought. Traditional semantics has described antonyms as pairs of words expressing opposite meanings, such as *buono–cattivo* or *alto–basso* in Italian, and *yaxshi–yomon* or *baland–past* in Uzbek. However, modern approaches in cognitive linguistics have shown that opposition extends beyond simple polarity to include conceptual, metaphorical, and cultural dimensions. The notion of antinomy introduces a philosophical aspect of contradiction within logical or conceptual systems. In linguistic terms, it reflects paradoxical meanings that coexist within discourse and human reasoning. Similarly, contrast represents a broader mechanism that encompasses both antonymy and antinomy, highlighting distinctions and guiding interpretation in communication. Italian and Uzbek offer distinct yet comparable perspectives on how opposition is linguistically expressed and cognitively structured. While Italian often encodes contrast through gradable adjectives and metaphorical extension, Uzbek displays

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symmetry and binary balance rooted in cultural and experiential imagery. The present study aims to classify antonyms, antinomy, and contrast in Italian and Uzbek by integrating structural and cognitive perspectives. Using a descriptive-comparative approach, it analyzes lexical pairs and conceptual oppositions to identify both universal and culture-specific patterns. The research seeks to contribute to understanding how linguistic contrast functions as a bridge between language, cognition, and culture.

### Literature Review and Methodology

Antonymy has long been recognized as a key relation in lexical semantics and cognitive linguistics. Early structuralist studies by Lyons (1977) and Cruse (1986) defined antonyms as lexical pairs with opposite meanings within the same semantic field, distinguishing gradable, complementary, and relational types. Later research emphasized that opposition is context-sensitive and influenced by discourse function. Cognitive linguistics expanded this view by exploring the conceptual basis of antonymy. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) showed that oppositional meanings are grounded in embodied experience and conceptual metaphors, such as up–down or life–death. Langacker (1987, 2008) interpreted contrast as a cognitive construal used to highlight distinctions in mental representation.

In Italian linguistics, scholars such as Dardano and Trifone (2015) and De Mauro (2000) discussed antonymy as a central mechanism of lexical organization and stylistic contrast. In Uzbek linguistics, studies by G‘ulomov (1995) and Rahmatullayev (2008) emphasized the cultural and symbolic aspects of oppositional pairs, linking antonymy with moral, spatial, and emotional categories. However, comparative research between Italian and Uzbek remains limited. The present study builds on this theoretical foundation to integrate semantic typology with cognitive interpretation, highlighting how contrastive meaning reflects shared and culture-specific conceptual models.

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This research employs a qualitative descriptive-comparative method grounded in lexical semantics and cognitive linguistics.

Data Sources: (1) Vocabolario Treccani Italian: and Corpora dell'Italiano Scritto (CORIS/CODIS), (2) O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati Uzbek: and the National Corpus of the Uzbek Language.

- ✓ Identify antonymic pairs representing gradable, complementary, and relational types in both languages.
- ✓ Analyze each pair for semantic structure (polarity, gradability, context) and cognitive framing (conceptual metaphors, image schemas).
- ✓ Compare Italian and Uzbek examples to identify universal and culture-specific patterns of opposition and contrast.

Validity: Triangulation of dictionary, corpus, and theoretical data ensures reliability. Interpretations are cross-checked with established frameworks in semantics and cognitive linguistics to maintain analytical consistency.

### Results and Discussion

The comparative analysis of Italian and Uzbek antonyms revealed both universal and language-specific tendencies in the way opposition is structured, expressed, and interpreted. Antonymy, as the linguistic representation of contrast, manifests in similar semantic types across both languages, yet the cognitive framing and cultural significance attached to these oppositions differ considerably. This section discusses the findings through three primary lenses: the semantic classification of antonyms, the cognitive and cultural patterns underlying opposition, and the broader conceptual function of contrast as a mechanism of meaning construction.

### Semantic Classification of Antonyms

The data derived from Italian and Uzbek corpora and dictionaries confirmed the existence of the three fundamental types of antonymy described in lexical

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semantics: gradable, complementary, and relational oppositions (Cruse, 1986; Murphy, 2010).

Gradable antonyms in both Italian and Uzbek represent lexical pairs that express two extremes of a continuous scale, allowing for intermediate degrees. Common examples include Italian *alto–basso* (“high–low”), *grande–piccolo* (“big–small”), *caldo–freddo* (“hot–cold”), and Uzbek *baland–past*, *katta–kichik*, *issiq–sovuq*. Such antonyms illustrate how both languages conceptualize measurable qualities. However, subtle differences appear in metaphorical and pragmatic use. In Italian, gradable antonyms are frequently extended to abstract and evaluative domains—*un’idea alta* (“a noble idea”), *una voce fredda* (“a cold voice”)—revealing a tendency to employ physical properties metaphorically to express emotional or intellectual values. Uzbek, on the other hand, preserves more concrete imagery but maintains symbolic interpretations tied to moral or cultural meaning, as in *katta niyat* (“high intention”) or *sovuq munosabat* (“cold attitude”). These examples indicate that while Italian metaphorical extension often highlights individual perception and aesthetic value, Uzbek emphasizes ethical and relational harmony.

Complementary antonyms denote pairs that are mutually exclusive and cannot be simultaneously true, such as Italian *vivo–morto* (“alive–dead”), *vero–falso* (“true–false”), and Uzbek *tirik–o‘lik*, *to‘g‘ri–noto‘g‘ri*. These pairs express binary contrasts with clear logical boundaries. The cultural resonance of these oppositions, however, differs. In Italian, such contrasts are often used to mark logical or philosophical distinctions, while in Uzbek they are deeply embedded in moral and social discourse. For instance, the pair *oq–qora* (“white–black”) in Uzbek carries symbolic connotations of good versus evil, purity versus corruption, whereas in Italian *bianco–nero* often appears in aesthetic or descriptive contexts rather than moral ones. This shows that complementary antonyms serve as both linguistic opposites and cultural metaphors reflecting value systems.

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Relational antonyms express oppositions based on reciprocal roles or perspectives, such as Italian *insegnante-studente* (“teacher-student”), *padre-figlio* (“father-son”), or *compratore-venditore* (“buyer-seller”), and Uzbek *o‘qituvchi-talaba*, *ota-bola*, *sotuvchi-xaridor*. These pairs highlight how relationships and social roles are conceptualized differently. Italian tends to encode such relationships within institutional or social structures, emphasizing function and hierarchy. Uzbek, by contrast, frames them within cultural norms of respect, community, and moral duty. For example, *ota-bola* in Uzbek implies not only a biological relation but also a moral hierarchy shaped by filial responsibility and reverence. The relational antonyms thus reveal how both languages reflect their respective social and cultural frameworks through linguistic structures of opposition.

### Cognitive Patterns and Conceptual Opposition

From a cognitive perspective, antonymy is not limited to lexical contrast but reflects deeper conceptual patterns that structure thought. Italian antonymy shows a strong reliance on metaphorical schemas, particularly those related to verticality (*alto-basso*), temperature (*caldo-freddo*), and lightness (*chiaro-scuro*). These schemas, as described by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), derive from embodied experience and are mapped onto evaluative or emotional domains. For instance, *alto* (high) is associated with superiority, virtue, and nobility (*un ideale alto*), while *basso* (low) conveys inferiority or moral decline (*bassi istinti*). Similarly, *chiaro-scuro* (light-dark) pairs extend from visual perception to moral and aesthetic meanings in expressions like *una figura oscura* (“a dark character”). Uzbek conceptualizations, while sharing some universal metaphors, emphasize balance and duality rather than polarity. The pair *oq-qora* functions as a pervasive cultural symbol of moral contrast but also of harmony—the coexistence of opposites within a balanced worldview. Pairs like *yaxshi-yomon* (“good-bad”) and *haqiqat-yolg‘on* (“truth-falsehood”) are frequently employed in proverbs and

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idioms to reinforce ethical reflection: Yaxshi so‘z jon ozig‘i, yomon so‘z jon azobi (“A kind word nourishes the soul, a bad word torments it”). This demonstrates how cognitive contrast in Uzbek is moral and relational, emphasizing collective harmony rather than conflict.

A particularly interesting category observed in both languages is the antinomic pair, which expresses paradox or contradiction within a single conceptual frame. Examples include Italian *libertà-dipendenza* (“freedom-dependence”) and Uzbek *erkinlik-bo‘ysunish*. These pairs capture tensions inherent in human experience, such as the balance between autonomy and obligation. In Italian, antinomic expressions are frequent in philosophical or literary discourse (e.g., *la dolce tristezza* - “sweet sadness”), reflecting dialectical thought influenced by humanism and existentialism. Uzbek, conversely, tends to reinterpret contradiction as moral or spiritual complementarity, often resolving paradox through collective or ethical synthesis. Thus, while Italian antinomy foregrounds conflict and individuality, Uzbek antinomy highlights resolution and unity.

### Cross-Linguistic and Cognitive Insights

The findings confirm that antonymy, antinomy, and contrast are universal in form but culturally shaped in function. Both Italian and Uzbek organize opposition around shared conceptual schemas-such as space, temperature, light, and morality-demonstrating the cognitive grounding of human experience. Yet each language filters these universals through its own cultural logic.

In Italian, opposition is often dynamic and individualized, reflecting the language’s rhetorical richness and the cultural value of expressive contrast. The frequent use of metaphoric opposites-*amore-odio* (“love-hate”), *forza-debolezza* (“strength-weakness”)-shows how Italian discourse embraces tension as a creative force. In Uzbek, however, opposition tends to be harmonic and communal, guided by the cultural principle of balance (*muvozanat*). Even

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opposites like dushman-do‘st (“enemy-friend”) are interpreted within a moral continuum that prioritizes reconciliation and social unity.

Ultimately, the comparative analysis demonstrates that antonymy and contrast serve as cognitive instruments through which speakers of different languages interpret experience, organize categories, and express cultural values. The interplay between opposition and harmony, polarity and balance, reflects how language structures not only communication but also worldview. Italian and Uzbek, though distinct in historical and linguistic origin, share the universal cognitive need to understand the world through difference - yet each fulfills this need according to its unique cultural and semantic patterns.

### Conclusion

This study examined the semantic and cognitive classification of antonyms, antinomies, and contrasts in Italian and Uzbek, revealing both universal and culture-specific patterns of opposition. The analysis confirmed the presence of three main types of antonymy-gradable, complementary, and relational-in both languages, yet demonstrated different extensions and cultural interpretations. Italian antonymy tends to be abstract and expressive, often used metaphorically in intellectual and emotional contexts, as in *alto-basso* or *freddo-caldo*, reflecting a dynamic, individual-centered worldview. Uzbek antonymy, by contrast, is closely linked to moral and social harmony, evident in pairs like *yaxshi-yomon* or *oq-qora*, which carry ethical and symbolic meanings. Cognitively, contrast functions as a universal mechanism structuring perception and meaning, but its realization differs across cultures. Italian discourse values dialectical tension and stylistic expressiveness, while Uzbek emphasizes balance and complementarity.

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