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SEMANTIC AND COLLOCATIONAL ASYMMETRIES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK SYNONYMIC UNITS

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Abstract

This study investigates semantic and collocational asymmetries in English and Uzbek synonymic units from a comparative and contrastive linguistic perspective. The research focuses on how synonymic relations in the two languages differ in terms of semantic structure, contextual usage, collocational compatibility, stylistic differentiation, and pragmatic force. The study employs comparative, semantic, componential, contextual, and corpus-based analytical methods in order to identify similarities and divergences between English and Uzbek synonymic series. The findings demonstrate that synonymic equivalence between the two languages is predominantly partial rather than complete. Many lexical items share a common denotative core while differing significantly in connotation, register, collocational behavior, and communicative function.

Keywords: synonymy, semantic asymmetry, collocational analysis, comparative lexicology, English linguistics, Uzbek linguistics, lexical semantics, translation equivalence, corpus linguistics, pragmatic meaning

Introduction

Synonymy has long been regarded as one of the central phenomena in modern lexicology and semantics because it reflects the richness, flexibility, and expressive potential of language. In contemporary linguistic studies, synonymic

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relations are investigated not only from the perspective of denotative similarity but also through semantic nuances, stylistic variation, pragmatic force, and contextual distribution. Modern approaches emphasize that synonymic units are rarely fully interchangeable, since each lexical item carries specific semantic, emotional, and collocational features that determine its usage in discourse.

Semantic and collocational analysis plays a crucial role in identifying the internal structure of synonymic series and explaining how lexical items function within authentic communicative contexts. Semantic analysis reveals integral and differential meaning components, while collocational analysis demonstrates the combinatory behavior of lexical units in relation to surrounding words. Such approaches are especially important in comparative linguistics because synonymic equivalence across languages often appears asymmetrical rather than identical.

Methods

The present study employs a comparative and contrastive linguistic approach to investigate semantic and collocational asymmetries in English and Uzbek synonymic units. Comparative analysis is used to identify similarities and differences between lexical units in the two languages, while the contrastive method enables the examination of language-specific semantic structures, collocational patterns, and pragmatic features. These methods provide a systematic framework for evaluating equivalence relations and asymmetrical correspondences between English and Uzbek synonymic series.

Semantic analysis constitutes one of the primary methodological tools of the research. This method is applied to determine the denotative and connotative meanings of synonymic units, identify semantic overlap, and reveal subtle distinctions between lexical items within the same synonymic series. Particular attention is devoted to stylistic coloring, evaluative meaning, emotional associations, and register-based usage differences.

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The study also utilizes componential analysis in order to break down lexical meanings into smaller semantic features or components. Through this approach, integral semantic features shared by synonymic units and differential features distinguishing them are identified and classified. Componential analysis makes it possible to establish semantic hierarchies within synonymic series and determine dominant as well as peripheral lexical members.

Contextual and collocational analysis is employed to examine the combinatory behavior of synonymic units in authentic discourse. This method focuses on how lexical items interact with surrounding words in literary, academic, official, and conversational contexts. The analysis of collocational compatibility helps reveal restrictions, preferences, and asymmetrical usage patterns between English and Uzbek lexical units. Particular emphasis is placed on identifying cases in which semantically similar words demonstrate different collocational environments.

Results

Semantic Asymmetry between English and Uzbek Synonymic Units. The analysis demonstrates that synonymic units in English and Uzbek rarely display complete semantic coincidence. Although many lexical items share a common denotative core, they differ significantly in semantic scope, emotional association, stylistic value, and contextual usage. English synonymic series often contain fine semantic gradations shaped by historical lexical stratification, particularly the coexistence of Germanic, French, and Latin borrowings. Uzbek synonymic systems, by contrast, frequently reflect distinctions influenced by Turkic, Persian, Arabic, and Russian lexical interaction.

For example, the English synonymic series big – large – huge – enormous cannot be translated into Uzbek through direct one-to-one equivalence. While *katta* functions as a general equivalent, lexical items such as *ulkan*, *bahaybat*, and *yirik* reveal different semantic intensities and contextual limitations. This demonstrates semantic asymmetry in both lexical range and pragmatic interpretation.

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Collocational Restrictions and Preferences. The study reveals substantial collocational asymmetries between English and Uzbek synonymic units. Lexical items that appear semantically similar frequently exhibit different combinatory behavior. English synonymic units tend to form stable collocations influenced by register and discourse conventions, whereas Uzbek equivalents may prefer alternative lexical combinations.

For instance, the English adjective strong commonly collocates with tea, argument, influence, and possibility. However, its Uzbek equivalents kuchli or qudratli cannot be used uniformly in all contexts. Expressions such as strong tea are translated descriptively rather than literally, illustrating collocational incompatibility between the two languages.

Similarly, the English verbs begin, start, and commence demonstrate varying collocational distributions. Commence is strongly associated with formal and official discourse, whereas start appears more neutral and conversational. Uzbek equivalents boshlamoq or kirishmoq do not always preserve the same stylistic and collocational distinctions.

Dominant and Peripheral Members in Synonymic Series. The findings indicate that synonymic series in both languages possess internal hierarchical organization consisting of dominant and peripheral members. Dominant lexical items usually carry broad semantic applicability, neutral stylistic coloring, and high frequency of usage, while peripheral members express narrower, more specialized, or emotionally marked meanings.

In the English synonymic series ask – request – inquire, the verb ask functions as the dominant member due to its semantic neutrality and wide contextual distribution. Request and inquire occupy peripheral positions because they are associated with formal or institutional contexts. A similar hierarchy is observed in Uzbek synonymic series such as so‘ramoq – iltimos qilmoq – talab qilmoq, where so‘ramoq acts as the semantic center.

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The analysis further demonstrates that dominant-peripheral relations are not always symmetrical across languages. A lexical unit functioning as dominant in English may correspond to a peripheral equivalent in Uzbek depending on contextual and stylistic constraints.

Discussion

Interpretation of Semantic and Collocational Divergences. The findings of the study confirm that semantic and collocational divergences between English and Uzbek synonymic units are systematic rather than accidental. Synonymic relations in both languages are shaped by historical development, lexical borrowing, stylistic evolution, and discourse conventions. Although many lexical items share a common conceptual core, their semantic boundaries and combinatory possibilities differ significantly across languages.

The research demonstrates that synonymic equivalence cannot be understood solely through denotative similarity. Lexical units frequently diverge in emotional association, contextual distribution, pragmatic force, and stylistic acceptability. Such divergences indicate that synonymy is a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon influenced by both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.

Collocational asymmetry further reveals that lexical meaning is strongly dependent on habitual contextual usage. Words that appear semantically interchangeable may nevertheless differ in their compatibility with surrounding lexical items. Consequently, synonymic equivalence must be analyzed within authentic discourse environments rather than in isolated dictionary definitions.

Influence of Culture and Linguistic Worldview. The study highlights the significant role of cultural background and linguistic worldview in shaping synonymic systems. English and Uzbek lexical structures reflect different historical experiences, social values, communicative traditions, and cultural associations. As a result, many synonymic units carry culture-specific

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connotations that influence semantic interpretation and contextual appropriateness.

English synonymic diversity has been substantially influenced by the coexistence of Germanic, French, and Latin lexical layers, producing stylistic stratification between neutral, formal, and literary vocabulary. Uzbek synonymic systems, on the other hand, have developed under the influence of Turkic foundations combined with Persian, Arabic, and Russian lexical interaction. These historical processes contribute to asymmetrical semantic organization between the two languages.

The findings also suggest that linguistic worldview affects how speakers categorize experience and evaluate meaning. Certain lexical distinctions that are semantically important in English may be less prominent in Uzbek, while Uzbek lexical units may express culturally specific nuances absent in English. Therefore, synonymic asymmetry reflects not only linguistic structure but also culturally embedded conceptualization.

The Role of Context in Synonym Selection. The analysis confirms that context plays a decisive role in synonym selection and semantic realization. Synonymic units cannot be treated as universally interchangeable because their meanings are activated and modified by communicative environment, discourse type, speaker intention, and pragmatic conditions.

Contextual analysis demonstrates that lexical items acquire specialized semantic shades in literary, academic, official, and conversational discourse. For instance, formal synonyms are preferred in institutional communication, whereas neutral lexical units dominate everyday interaction. Literary discourse often exploits peripheral synonyms to achieve expressive or aesthetic effects.

The study further reveals that collocational compatibility strongly depends on contextual patterns established through habitual language use. Consequently, accurate synonym selection requires awareness not only of dictionary meaning

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but also of register, collocational behavior, emotional coloring, and communicative purpose.

Theoretical Implications for Lexicology and Semantics. The research contributes to modern lexicology and semantics by demonstrating that synonymic relations should be examined through an integrated analytical framework combining semantic, collocational, stylistic, and pragmatic dimensions. Traditional approaches focusing exclusively on denotative similarity appear insufficient for explaining the complexity of interlingual synonymic equivalence.

Conclusion

The present study investigated semantic and collocational asymmetries in English and Uzbek synonymic units through comparative, semantic, contextual, and corpus-based analysis. The findings demonstrate that synonymic relations between the two languages are characterized by substantial asymmetry rather than direct equivalence. Although many lexical items share a common denotative core, they frequently differ in semantic scope, collocational compatibility, stylistic coloring, pragmatic force, and contextual distribution.

The research revealed that semantic divergence is especially visible in cases where lexical items possess culture-specific associations, register-sensitive meanings, or differing emotional connotations. Collocational analysis further confirmed that semantically related words often demonstrate distinct combinatory behavior in English and Uzbek discourse. The study also established that synonymic series in both languages possess internal hierarchical organization consisting of dominant and peripheral lexical members whose functions vary according to communicative context and stylistic environment.

In conclusion, the study confirms that semantic and collocational asymmetries constitute a fundamental feature of interlingual synonymic relations between English and Uzbek. Understanding these asymmetries is essential not only for

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theoretical linguistic research but also for effective communication, translation accuracy, language pedagogy, and intercultural understanding.

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