



## SEMANTIC SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

**Javliyeva Lobar Akbar qizi**

Termiz iqtisodiyot va servis universiteti magistranti

**Ilmiy rahbar: f.f.f.d. (PhD), dotsent Kayumova Shaxnoza Kobiljonovna**

### **Abstract**

This article examines semantic similarities and differences between English and Uzbek from a comparative linguistic perspective. The study focuses on lexical meaning, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, metaphorical extension, cultural semantics, and context-dependent interpretation. English and Uzbek belong to different language families: English is a Germanic language of the Indo-European family, while Uzbek is a Turkic language. Because of this typological difference, the two languages demonstrate different grammatical structures, word-formation models, and semantic organization. However, they also share universal semantic features because both languages reflect general human cognition, social experience, emotional perception, and communicative needs. The purpose of this article is to identify major areas where English and Uzbek show semantic similarity and divergence. The research uses a descriptive-comparative method and analyzes examples from everyday vocabulary, abstract concepts, kinship terms, emotional words, metaphorical expressions, and culturally specific lexical units. The results show that similarities are mostly observed in universal conceptual fields such as family, nature, body, emotion, time, space, and social relations. Differences are more visible in culturally marked vocabulary, politeness expressions, kinship terminology, word connotation, metaphorical models, and the semantic range of certain lexical items. The study concludes that semantic comparison of English and Uzbek is important for translation, intercultural communication, foreign language teaching, and the development of comparative linguistics.

**Keywords:** semantics, English, Uzbek, lexical meaning, polysemy, synonymy, cultural semantics, comparative linguistics, metaphor, translation.

### **Introduction**

Semantics is one of the central branches of linguistics that studies meaning in language. It deals with the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, and larger units of discourse. Every language has its own semantic system, but at the same time all languages reflect common human experience. People in different cultures name objects, describe emotions, express relationships, evaluate actions, and communicate abstract ideas. Therefore, the comparative study of semantics allows researchers to understand both universal and national-specific features of language.



English and Uzbek are especially interesting for semantic comparison because they belong to different linguistic systems. English is an analytical language with relatively limited inflection and a strong reliance on word order, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. Uzbek is an agglutinative Turkic language in which grammatical and semantic relations are often expressed through suffixes. These structural differences influence not only grammar but also the way meaning is formed, extended, and interpreted.

The relevance of this topic is connected with the increasing role of English-Uzbek translation, language teaching, intercultural communication, international education, and scientific cooperation. Many semantic mistakes in translation occur not because the translator does not know the dictionary meaning of a word, but because they do not understand its contextual meaning, connotation, cultural association, or pragmatic function. For example, the English word “home” and the Uzbek word “uy” may look similar at first glance, but “home” often carries stronger emotional meanings of belonging, comfort, family, and identity. Uzbek “uy” can also express these meanings, but depending on context it may simply mean a physical house. Such differences show that semantic equivalence is rarely absolute.

The aim of this article is to analyze the semantic similarities and differences between English and Uzbek. The main objectives are to describe shared semantic features, identify culturally specific meanings, compare polysemy and synonymy, examine metaphorical extensions, and explain the importance of semantic awareness in translation and language learning.

### **Methodology**

The article uses a descriptive-comparative research method. The object of the study is the semantic structure of English and Uzbek lexical units. The subject of the study is the similarity and difference between the meanings, connotations, semantic fields, and contextual uses of selected words and expressions in both languages.

The research material includes common lexical units from everyday communication, kinship vocabulary, emotional vocabulary, abstract concepts, culturally specific words, and metaphorical meanings. The analysis is qualitative rather than statistical. The purpose is not to count lexical items but to explain how meanings are formed and how they differ across English and Uzbek.

The study follows three analytical stages. First, lexical units with similar basic meanings are compared. Second, differences in semantic scope, connotation, and cultural association are identified. Third, the role of context in meaning interpretation is analyzed. This approach makes it possible to show that semantic comparison should not be limited to dictionary equivalence. It must include cultural, cognitive, and communicative factors.



## Results

The analysis shows that English and Uzbek have both universal semantic similarities and language-specific semantic differences.

One of the main similarities is the existence of common semantic fields. Both languages have developed vocabulary related to family, nature, body parts, colours, numbers, time, space, work, education, emotion, and social relations. For example, English “mother” and Uzbek “ona,” English “water” and Uzbek “suv,” English “sun” and Uzbek “quyosh,” English “hand” and Uzbek “qo‘l” refer to basic concepts that exist in human experience. These words have direct referential meaning and are usually easy to translate in simple contexts.

Another similarity is the presence of polysemy. In both languages, one word may have several related meanings. For example, the English word “head” may mean a body part, a leader, the top part of something, or mental ability. Uzbek “bosh” has similar semantic extensions: “bosh” as a body part, “boshliq” as a leader, “bosh sahifa” as a main page, “bosh masala” as the main issue. This shows a universal cognitive tendency: important body-part words often develop abstract and social meanings.

Both English and Uzbek also use metaphorical meaning. For example, English has expressions such as “a warm person,” “cold attitude,” “bright future,” and “deep thought.” Uzbek has similar metaphorical patterns: “iliq munosabat,” “sovuq qarash,” “yorqin kelajak,” “chuqur fikr.” These examples show that both languages use physical experience to express abstract meaning. Warmth is connected with kindness, coldness with emotional distance, brightness with hope, and depth with intellectual seriousness.

However, important semantic differences also exist. The first major difference is connected with the semantic range of words. One word in English may correspond to several Uzbek words, or one Uzbek word may require several English equivalents. For example, English “know” may correspond to Uzbek “bilmoq,” “tanimoq,” or “xabardor bo‘lmoq” depending on context. “I know this rule” means “Men bu qoidani bilaman,” but “I know him” usually means “Men uni taniyman.” If both are translated mechanically as “bilaman,” the meaning may become unnatural.

Another example is the Uzbek word “ko‘ngil.” It is difficult to translate into English with one stable equivalent. Depending on context, it may mean heart, mood, desire, feeling, intention, inner state, or emotional attitude. Expressions such as “ko‘nglim yo‘q,” “ko‘ngli to‘ldi,” “ko‘nglini oldi,” and “ko‘ngli buzildi” require different English translations. This shows that some Uzbek words carry culturally dense semantic content.

A second difference is found in kinship terms. Uzbek has a more detailed system of kinship vocabulary than English. For example, English “uncle” may refer to both father’s brother and mother’s brother. Uzbek distinguishes “amaki” and “tog‘a.” English “aunt” may



refer to both father's sister and mother's sister, while Uzbek distinguishes "amma" and "xola." This difference reflects not only lexical structure but also the cultural importance of extended family relations in Uzbek society.

A third difference is related to connotation. Words may have similar dictionary meanings but different emotional or cultural associations. For example, English "old" may sometimes sound negative when used about people, so speakers often prefer "elderly" or "senior." In Uzbek, "qari" may also sound direct or negative in some contexts, while "kekxa," "yoshi ulug'," or "nuroniy" sound more respectful. The semantic difference here is not denotative but connotative and pragmatic.

A fourth difference appears in abstract vocabulary. English often uses Latin- or French-origin abstract words such as "development," "communication," "formation," "integration," and "implementation." Uzbek may express these through borrowed international terms or through native constructions such as "rivojlanish," "muloqot," "shakllanish," "uyg'unlashuv," and "joriy etish." In academic style, Uzbek frequently combines native and borrowed elements, while English often distinguishes between everyday Germanic words and formal Latinate vocabulary.

A fifth difference is visible in politeness and respect semantics. Uzbek has many lexical and grammatical forms that express respect, age hierarchy, social distance, and politeness. Words such as "siz," "domla," "opa," "aka," "ustoz," "otaxon," and "onaxon" may express not only social role but also respect and emotional closeness. English has politeness strategies too, but they are expressed differently, often through modal verbs, indirect questions, tone, and lexical choices such as "please," "could," "would," and "sir/madam."

### **Discussion**

The comparison shows that semantic similarity between English and Uzbek is mainly based on universal human experience, while semantic difference is mainly shaped by culture, social structure, historical development, and linguistic typology. Basic words related to nature, body, family, and daily activities often have clear equivalents. However, even these words may develop different metaphorical and cultural meanings.

For instance, the semantic extension of "head/bosh" is very similar in both languages because the head is universally perceived as the upper and controlling part of the body. Therefore, it becomes a metaphor for leadership, beginning, importance, and intellect. At the same time, not all body-related meanings are identical. Some meanings that are natural in Uzbek may require different structures in English, and vice versa.

The problem of semantic equivalence is especially important in translation. A weak translator usually searches for word-to-word equivalents. A competent translator searches for contextual and functional equivalence. For example, translating "ko'nglim to'lmadi" as "my



heart did not fill” is wrong. Depending on the situation, it may mean “I was not satisfied,” “I did not feel convinced,” or “It did not meet my expectations.” Similarly, translating “I see your point” as only “Men sizning nuqtangizni ko‘ryapman” is unnatural; it should be “Fikringizni tushundim” or “Nima demoqchi ekaningizni tushundim.”

Semantic differences also affect language teaching. Learners often assume that every word in their native language has one direct equivalent in the foreign language. This assumption is false and dangerous. It leads to literal translation, unnatural speech, and misunderstanding. Therefore, English and Uzbek vocabulary should be taught through semantic fields, collocations, connotations, and context.

The analysis also shows that cultural semantics must be taken seriously. Words such as “mahalla,” “hashar,” “ustoz,” “ko‘ngil,” “andisha,” and “oriyat” cannot be fully translated into English by a single word without explanation. They represent social values and cultural practices specific to Uzbek life. In the same way, English words such as “privacy,” “challenge,” “commitment,” “community,” and “identity” may require careful contextual translation into Uzbek.

Thus, semantic comparison is not only a linguistic task. It is also a cultural and communicative task. It helps reveal how different languages organize human experience and how speakers interpret the world through language.

### **Conclusion**

English and Uzbek demonstrate both semantic similarities and semantic differences. Similarities are mostly found in universal semantic fields such as body parts, nature, time, space, family, emotions, and basic human activities. Both languages use polysemy, metaphor, synonymy, antonymy, and contextual meaning. These shared features show that human cognition creates certain common patterns in language.

Differences are more visible in culturally specific vocabulary, kinship terms, connotations, politeness expressions, abstract concepts, and semantic scope. Uzbek often provides more detailed lexical distinctions in kinship and social respect, while English has its own complex system of abstract vocabulary, collocation, and contextual meaning. Some Uzbek words such as “ko‘ngil,” “andisha,” “oriyat,” and “mahalla” have no exact English equivalent. Likewise, some English words require contextual explanation in Uzbek.

The study proves that semantic comparison of English and Uzbek is important for translation, foreign language teaching, intercultural communication, and linguistic research. The main conclusion is that meaning is not limited to dictionary definition. It includes context, culture, connotation, metaphor, social relation, and speaker intention. Therefore, learners, translators, and researchers must analyze words not separately but within their semantic and cultural environment.



### References

Cruse, D. A. (2000). *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Geeraerts, D. (2010). *Theories of Lexical Semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.