



CONTEXTUAL AND FUNCTIONAL DIFFERENTIATION OF PLESIONYMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. This article examines the contextual and functional differentiation of plesionyms in English and Uzbek. Plesionyms are understood as semantically proximate lexical units that share common semantic features but differ in particular aspects of meaning, contextual distribution, collocation, stylistic value, connotation, or pragmatic function. The purpose of the study is to identify the principal contextual mechanisms through which plesionymic relations are differentiated and to determine their functional realization in English and Uzbek. The research employs componential, contextual, comparative, distributional, and functional methods. Selected lexical relations are analyzed according to their shared and distinctive semantic components and their behavior in context. The findings demonstrate that semantic proximity does not entail complete interchangeability.

Keywords: plesionymy, near-synonymy, lexical semantics, contextual differentiation, functional differentiation, collocation, pragmatics, English, Uzbek.

INTRODUCTION. Lexical-semantic relations represent an essential component of the vocabulary of any language. The semantic organization of lexical units enables speakers to express conceptual distinctions with varying degrees of precision and contributes to the effectiveness of communication. Among lexical-semantic relations, synonymy and near-synonymy are particularly significant because languages contain numerous lexical units that demonstrate semantic proximity without being completely identical. Plesionymy is relevant to this problem because it describes a relationship in which lexical units share substantial semantic content while retaining certain distinctive characteristics. The concept is closely related to near-synonymy, although the contextual behavior of plesionyms indicates that semantic similarity alone cannot explain their actual distribution.

The English–Uzbek comparison is especially relevant because the two languages possess different lexical systems and have developed under different linguistic and cultural conditions.



Nevertheless, both languages contain numerous semantically proximate lexical units whose use is determined by contextual and functional factors.

Plesionymy has also been investigated comparatively in English and Uzbek. Djumabaeva's study examined plesionymy and graduonymy in the two languages and identified similarities and differences between these semantic categories. The present research develops this field from a different perspective by concentrating on the contextual and functional differentiation of plesionyms.

The purpose of this study is to identify the major contextual and functional mechanisms through which plesionyms are differentiated in English and Uzbek.

The objectives are:

- to identify shared and distinctive semantic features of selected plesionyms;
- to examine contextual and collocational factors affecting their distribution;
- to determine their stylistic, evaluative, and pragmatic characteristics;
- to compare their functional realization in English and Uzbek.

METHODS. The research employs an integrated qualitative and comparative methodology. Componential analysis is used to identify semantic features shared by members of a plesionymic relation and the features that distinguish them. This makes it possible to establish the semantic basis of a relationship and its distinctive components.

Contextual analysis is applied to determine how lexical meanings are realized in particular linguistic environments. Particular attention is given to the surrounding lexical elements and the communicative conditions in which a lexical unit occurs.

Comparative analysis is employed to establish similarities and differences between English and Uzbek plesionymic relations.

Functional analysis is used to identify the communicative effects of lexical choice, including specification, intensification, stylistic marking, evaluation, expressiveness, and pragmatic differentiation.

The study uses selected English and Uzbek lexical relations representing different forms of semantic proximity. The analytical procedure follows the model:

shared semantic component → distinctive feature → contextual restriction → functional effect.
This model enables the investigation to move from lexical-semantic description to actual contextual and functional realization.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. The analysis demonstrates that the differentiation of plesionyms occurs through several interconnected dimensions: semantic context, collocation, degree, stylistic register, evaluation, and pragmatic function.

Semantic and contextual differentiation. The English verbs *look* and *watch* illustrate semantic proximity combined with contextual differentiation.

Compare: *She looked at the picture. She watched the film.*

Both verbs are related to visual perception. However, *look* generally denotes directing one's eyes or attention toward an object, whereas *watch* commonly implies sustained observation of an event, activity, or moving object. A broadly comparable distinction may be observed between Uzbek *qaramoq* and *tomosha qilmoq*. *Qaramoq* has a broad meaning associated with directing one's gaze or looking at something, while *tomosha qilmoq* generally implies purposeful or sustained observation, often of an event, performance, or activity. The examples demonstrate that the shared semantic component does not eliminate contextual differentiation. The appropriate lexical choice depends on how the perceptual activity is conceptualized in a particular context. Thus:

look / qaramoq → directed visual attention

watch / tomosha qilmoq → sustained or purposeful observation

The distinction is therefore partly semantic and partly contextual-functional. *Collocational differentiation.* Collocation is another important factor in the differentiation of closely related lexical units. Consider the English combinations: *strong tea; powerful argument*

Although *strong* and *powerful* overlap semantically in certain contexts, they do not have identical collocational distributions. A speaker's lexical choice is therefore influenced by conventional patterns of combination rather than by dictionary meaning alone.

This observation is significant for plesionymy because two lexical units may demonstrate substantial semantic proximity while differing in their ability to occur in particular combinations.

Differentiation according to degree. Another manifestation of plesionymy involves differences in semantic intensity. The English pair *big – huge* and the Uzbek pair *katta – ulkan* illustrate this type of relationship. Both members of each pair share the general semantic component of size. However, the second member generally indicates a greater degree.



Language	Lexical pair	Shared component	Distinctive feature	Functional effect
English	<i>Big-huge</i>	Size	Greater degree	intensification
Uzbek	<i>Kata- ulkan</i>	Size	Greater degree	intensification

Stylistic differentiation. Plesionymic relations can also be differentiated according to stylistic register. The English verbs *ask* and *inquire* provide an illustrative example:

I *asked* about the results. The *committee* *inquired* into the matter.

Both verbs involve requesting information, but they have different stylistic profiles. *Ask* is neutral and highly frequent in everyday communication, whereas *inquire* is more strongly associated with formal, institutional, or official contexts.

The relationship can therefore be represented as:

ask → neutral/general; *inquire* → formal/institutional

Comparable stylistic distinctions can occur in Uzbek, where lexical choices may reflect neutral, colloquial, official, literary, or elevated styles. This demonstrates that the substitution of one plesionym for another may preserve the general propositional meaning while changing the stylistic character of the utterance.

The findings demonstrate that plesionymy cannot be adequately explained through semantic similarity alone. Although shared semantic content provides the basis for the relation, contextual and functional factors determine how the distinction between lexical units is realized.

CONCLUSION. The present study has examined the contextual and functional differentiation of plesionyms in English and Uzbek. The results demonstrate that plesionymy is characterized by semantic proximity combined with contextual and functional differentiation. The analysis shows that context plays a decisive role in revealing differences between closely related lexical units. Semantic context can activate distinctive components of meaning, while collocational context restricts lexical substitution. Stylistic context determines register, and pragmatic context may influence evaluation, emotional colouring, emphasis, and communicative intention. The comparison of English and Uzbek reveals a common principle of partial semantic equivalence together with language-specific patterns of lexical distribution, collocation, stylistic marking, and connotation. Therefore, plesionymy should be investigated through an integrated lexical-semantic, contextual, comparative, and functional approach. The findings are relevant to



comparative linguistics, translation studies, lexicography, and foreign-language teaching. Further research should employ larger corpus datasets from English and Uzbek in order to establish frequency patterns, collocational profiles, and recurrent discourse constructions associated with plesionymic relations.

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