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**THE CLASSIFICATION OF SYNONYMS AND THEIR SPECIFIC  
FEATURES**

Jizzakh branch of the National University of Uzbekistan  
Named after Mirzo Ulugbek  
The Faculty of Psychology, the department of Foreign languages  
Philology and t foreign languages  
Specific advisor

**Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla**

[nafisateshaboyeva@jbnuu.uz](mailto:nafisateshaboyeva@jbnuu.uz)

Student of group 401-22: **Iskandarova Sarvinoz Shukurullo qizi**

[Sarvinoziskandarova874@gmail.com](mailto:Sarvinoziskandarova874@gmail.com)

**ANNOTATION:** This article provides a comprehensive overview of the classification of synonyms, a topic that is essential for understanding the nuances of language and communication. The author explores the various ways in which synonyms can be categorized, including by semantic relationship, connotation, and register. By delving into these different classifications, the article offers valuable insights into the complexity of synonymy and its implications for effective language use. This resource will be beneficial for linguists, language learners, and anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the richness and diversity of synonyms in the English language.

**KEY WORDS:** synonyms, classification, context, domain, connotations, types, features ,linguistic, literal meanings.

Synonyms are words that have similar meanings, and they play a crucial role in language and communication. However, not all synonyms are created equal, and they can be classified into different categories based on their relationships to each other. Understanding the classification of synonyms can help us use language more effectively and accurately .

Words can be classified in different ways. The classification of words may be based upon: similarity of meanings and polarity of meanings of words. The Similarity of meanings is found in synonymic groups .Synonyms in their term are words coinciding in their emotional and stylistic fields .Synonymy is one of modern linguistics most controversial problems. The very existence of words traditionally called synonyms is disputed by some linguists; the nature and essence of the relationships of these words is hotly debated and treated in quite different ways by the representatives of different linguistic schools.



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In the following extract, in which a young woman rejects a proposal of marriage, the verbs like, admire and love, all describe feelings of attraction, approbation, fondness:

“I have always liked you very much, I admire your talent, but, forgive me, — I could never love you as a wife should love her husband.”

(From *The Shivering Sands* by V. Holt)

Yet, each of the three verbs, though they all describe more or less the same feeling of liking, describes it in its own way: “I like you, i. e. I have certain warm feelings towards you, but they are not strong enough for me to describe them as “love”,” — so that like and love are in a way opposed to each other.

The duality of synonyms is, probably, their most confusing feature: they are somewhat the same, yet they are most obviously different. Both aspects of their dual characteristics are essential for them to perform their function in speech: revealing different aspects, shades and variations of the same phenomenon.

“— Was she a pretty girl?

—I would certainly have called her attractive.”

(Ibid.)

A group of synonyms may be studied with the help of their dictionary definitions (definitional analysis). In this process the data from various dictionaries is analyzed comparatively. After that the definitions are subjected to transformational operations (transformational analysis). In this way, the semantic components of each analyzed word are signed out.

Here are the results of the definitional and transformational analysis of some synonyms for the verb to look.

Denotation	Connotation
1. To stare:	to look + steadily, lastingly + in surprise, curiosity, etc.
2. To glare:	to look + steadily, lastingly + in anger, rage.
3. To gaze:	to look + steadily, lastingly + in admiration.
4. To glance:	to look + briefly, in passing.
5. To peep:	to look + steadily, lastingly + by stealth,

Through an opening or from

A conceded location.

The synonymous words smash and crush are semantically very close, they combine to give a forceful representation of the atrocities of war. Even this preliminary example makes it obvious that the still very common definitions of



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synonyms as words of the same language having the same meaning or as different words that stand for the same notion are by no means accurate and even in a way misleading. By the very nature of language every word has its own history, its own peculiar motivation, its own typical contexts. And besides there is always some hidden possibility of different connotation and feeling in each of them. Moreover, words of the same meaning would be useless for communication: they would encumber the language, not enrich it. If two words exactly coincide in meaning and use, the natural tendency is for one of them to change its meaning or drop out of the language.

Thus, synonyms are words only similar but not identical in meaning. This definition is correct but vague. E. g. horse and animal are also semantically similar but not synonymous. A more precise linguistic definition should be based on a workable notion of the semantic structure of the word and of the complex nature of every separate meaning in a polysemantic word. Each separate lexical meaning of a word has been described in Chapter 3 as consisting of a denotational component identifying the notion or the object and reflecting the essential features of the notion named, shades of meaning reflecting its secondary features, additional connotations resulting from typical contexts in which the word is used, its emotional component and stylistic colouring. Connotations are not necessarily present in every word. The basis of a synonymic opposition is formed by the first of the above named components, i.e. the denotational component. It will be remembered that the term opposition means the relationship of partial difference between two partially similar elements of a language. A common denotational component forms the basis of the opposition in synonymic group. All the other components can vary and thus form the distinctive features of the synonymic oppositions.

Synonyms can therefore be defined in terms of linguistics as two or more words of the same language, belonging to the same part of speech and possessing one or more identical or nearly identical denotational meanings, interchangeable, at least in some contexts without any considerable alteration in denotational meaning, but differing in morphemic composition, phonemic shape, shades of meaning, connotations, style, valency and idiomatic use. Additional characteristics of style, emotional colouring and valency peculiar to one of the elements in a synonymic group may be absent in one or all of the others.

Synonyms are two or more words having the same essential meaning or, sometimes nearly the same meaning, but different shades of meanings. They are



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words coinciding in their notional just but different in their emotional or stylistic shades of meaning.

The only existing classification system for synonyms was established by Academician Vinogradov.

1) Ideographic synonyms are words conveying the same concept but differing in shades of meaning, e. g. fast – rapid – swift – quick, etc.;

2) Stylistic synonyms differ in stylistic characteristics, e. g. to begin (neutral) – to commence (bookish) – to start (neutral) – to initiate (bookish);

3) Absolute synonyms coincide in all their shades of meaning and in all their stylistic characteristics and, therefore, are interchangeable in all contexts, e. g. compounding – composition; word-building – word-formation

Absolute stylistic synonyms are rare in the vocabulary. The vocabulary system tends to abolish it either by rejecting one of the absolute synonyms or by developing differentiation characteristics in one or both of them.

When speaking about the sources of synonyms, besides desynonymization and abbreviation, we can also mention the formation of phrasal verbs, For example «to give up» - «(to abandon)), «to cut down» - «(to diminish)).

The main sources of synonyms are:

1) Borrowings: to ask—to question: (F)—to interrogate. (L) to begin (A, S) — to commence (F) —to initiate (L— rise (F) — ascend (L);

2) The formation of verb -f adverb (V + adv) combinations like «have a smoke». To rest — to have a rest to swim — to have a swim, to smoke — to have a smoke;

3) Shortening: vacation — vac, doctor — doc, sister — sis;

4) Conversion: laughter — laugh,

5) many set expressions consisting of a verb with a postpositive element form synonymsj For example. To choose — to pick out, to continue — to go on, to return — to bring back.

6) Euphemisms, I, e. words which are used instead of unpleasant words: For example. Drunk-merry, ledger-paying guest, to die — to go away, commandment —Command.

7) Slang, i. e. emotionally coloured words which are the secondary names of Objects. For example. Сокрушитель, — crusher (полицейский), тюрьма— can (дословна консервная банка), убить — to bump off — (дословна пристукнуть),



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Казнить — to fry — (дословна заражить), голова—bean (дословна боб) .

Synonyms can also be classified based on their origin or etymology. Some synonyms have the same root word or origin, while others come from different linguistic sources. For example, “begin” and “commence” are derived from the same Latin root word, while “start” has a different Germanic origin. Understanding the etymology of synonyms can provide insights into their usage and historical development.

Finally, synonyms can be classified based on their domain or field of usage. Some synonyms are specific to certain contexts or disciplines, while others are more general and widely used. For example, “doctor” and “physician” are synonymous in the medical field but may not be interchangeable in everyday conversation.

In conclusion, the classification of synonyms is a complex and multifaceted topic that involves various aspects of language and linguistics. By understanding the different types of synonyms and their relationships to each other, we can use language more effectively and accurately in communication. Whether it's absolute versus relative synonyms, grammatical versus lexical synonyms, or synonyms based on etymology or domain, a deeper understanding of synonym classification can enrich our vocabulary and language skills.

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