

## The Description of Semantic Relationships in Different Linguistic Systems

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### ABSTRACT

*The article is dedicated to the usage of semantic relationships in translation. As well as the different perspectives of world linguistics have been deeply learned and implemented in the practice of research work. The classification of semantic relationships made by world scholars has been discussed and the classification of the same relationships suggested by Uzbek linguists has also been mentioned. The differences between semantic relationships and lexical relationships have been analyzed with examples. Specific types of lexical relationships are also given as a list with English and Uzbek examples from literary sources. Especially, the semantic relationship which is called synonymy and plesionymy have stressed and analyzed through authentic examples. The role of semantics in context is of utmost importance. This article provides compelling evidence to substantiate this point. The translations of historical texts were examined, and as a result, it became possible to illustrate the appropriate word selection from the synonymic series using tables.*

**Keywords:** Semantics, lexicon, synonymy, meronymy, hyponymy, plesionymy, historical context, semantic relationship, lexical relationship

### INTRODUCTION

The words in the sentences of our speech are closely connected with each other semantically, ensuring that the speech is fluent, beautiful, harmonious, and at the same time impactful. Language

is the source that shapes and continuously enriches human cognitive abilities, and it is what primarily distinguishes humans from other creatures. As the field of linguistics develops, the study of the units that form human speech, enriching them, and deeply understanding the semantic relationships between words in order to use them extensively in speech is becoming increasingly active. A translator, who performs the task of conveying the meaning expressed in one language into another language sufficiently, acts as a linguistic bridge. Only when translators skillfully make use of this linguistic wealth and understand the subtlety of both languages, can they successfully convey the intended meaning of a text written in the source language to the target language reader at a high level. This, of course, requires the translator to be well-versed in both the subtleties of the languages, the correct and figurative meanings of words, their contextual use, to avoid word-for-word translation, and to recreate the work adequately.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

During our research we have used different modern methods of linguistics, such as: comparative, descriptive and component analysis. We can find a great number of research studies devoted to semantic relationships not only in world linguistics but also in Uzbek linguistics. The interpretation of inter-word semantic relationships has attracted the attention of various scholars, including philosophers, psychologists, linguists, specialists in preschool and school education, computer scientists, literary scholars, and researchers in the fields of human consciousness, cognition, and the semantic aspects of words. Several world scholars have conducted scientific research on how words enter into semantic relationships and manifest in speech, offering their thoughts on the matter.

Although the meanings of words in our speech have been studied for centuries, the section of linguistics that examines these semantic aspects was first named "semantics" by the French linguist Michael Bréal in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century [1]. The term "semantics" is derived from the Greek word *semantikos*, which means "to express" or "to signify."

Uzbek linguist A. Hojiyev, in turn, translated the word “semantics” from Greek as “expressive” and defined it as the content or meaning aspect of linguistic units [2]. From the above definitions, we can understand that semantics refers to the study of the meaning of linguistic units, their content, and significance in linguistics.

Semantics is a field of linguistics that deals with meaning. Semantics focuses on what the components within words, phonetic and morphological units, convey, paying no attention to their order or pronunciation [3]. The primary goal of semantics is to study how a word expresses meaning and how it forms semantic relationships when interacting with other words in context. The Australian linguist N. Riemer describes semantic relations and the field of semantics as follows: “Semantics is one of the richest and most fascinating parts of linguistics” [1]. This means that the branch of semantics is considered the richest and most beautiful part of linguistics. In his work, the linguist emphasizes that the meanings conveyed by words are the heart of language, comparing a meaningless language to lungs without air. Through this, he reveals how every unit of meaning in human language contributes to the beauty of speech and offers boundless semantic possibilities.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Words are classified into different types depending on how they form semantic relationships with each other. In her scientific work, *Semantic Relations and the Lexicon*, L. Murphy proposes dividing these relationships into two categories: psycholinguistics and pragmatics. Psycholinguistics refers to the spontaneous process of speech production, while pragmatics involves the use of cognitive abilities to logically connect words, incorporating national and cultural linguistic richness to form coherent speech [4]. From this perspective, it becomes clear that words engaged in synonymous or antonymous relationships do not always remain fixed in those relationships; instead, they can form various semantic connections depending on the context.

For example, in English, the words *hot* and *cold* are considered semantically opposite. The word “hot” can be

synonymous with “warm,” “heat,” or “boiling” according to a dictionary definition, while it forms an antonymic relationship with *cold* or *cool*. However, in context, these words can establish completely different semantic relationships. For instance:

It’s too hot in summer but very cold in winter

In this sentence, although the words “hot” and “cold” are in an antonymic relationship, in other contexts, they might not establish any semantic relationship:

He looks cool

Here, the word “cool” is not considered a synonym for “cold.” Thus, for fluent speech, as linguist L. Murphy pointed out, it is essential to effectively use both psycholinguistic and pragmatic approaches.

Several linguists classify semantic relationships between words in English into five main groups: contrast (differences), class inclusion (category membership), similarities, case relations (associations), and part-whole relations [5]. However, this classification system has not been universally accepted by all linguists. Some scholars consider “class inclusion” and “part-whole relations” to belong to the same group, while others argue that they represent distinct categories.

The phenomenon of synonymy, one of the most widespread types of semantic relationships, has been the subject of extensive research by linguists worldwide for several centuries. Notably, scholars such as R. Harris, J. Lyons, F. Gouin, A. Rum, A. Cruz, H. Jackson, A. Lehrer, L. Lipka, S. I. Hayakawa, O. Ehrlich, C. V. Kreidler, K. Fellbaum, and M. L. Murphy have deeply explored synonymy in their scientific works.

Similarly, Uzbek linguists such as S. Isamammedova, A. Doniyorov, U. Tursunov, N. Rajabov, R. Yunusov, B. Doniyarov, A. Hojiev, S. Usmonov, I. Qochqortoyev, I.A. Siddiqova, M. Asqarova, R. Qongurov, V. Egamberdiyev, M. Sodiqova, and G. Zikrillayev have also conducted in-depth studies on this subject. In global linguistics, semantic categories were initially divided into five main groups for study. These included:

1. **Contrast relations** (qarama-qarshilik) – further subdivided into seven subgroups.
2. **Similarity relations** (o‘xshashlik) – divided into four subgroups.
3. **Class inclusion relations** (turkunga mansublik) – with six subgroups.
4. **Case relations** (bog‘liqlik) – categorized into six subgroups.
5. **Part-whole relations** (bo‘lak-butun) – divided into seven subgroups [6].

English linguists have classified relations such as synonymy, hyponymy, and antonymy as “paradigmatic semantic relations among words” [7]. These relations are often referred to as lexical relations or semantic relations. In some cases, these two terms – “lexical relations” and “semantic relations” – can be used in a completely contrasting manner.

Specific types of lexical relations include: homonymy (omonimiya), polysemy (polisemiya), synonymy (sinonimiya), antonymy (antonimiya), hyponymy (giponimiya), meronymy (meronimiya), member-collection (a‘zo-to‘plam), portion-mass (bo‘lak-to‘da) [8]. Linguist L. Murphy, who examined semantic relations from a pragmatic perspective, pointed out that the terms “lexical relation” and “semantic relation” are used differently by various scholars. In her work, she highlighted the following examples of these relationships:

**Synonymy:** sofa = couch = divan = davenport

**Antonymy:** good/bad, life/death, come/go

**Contrast:** sweet/sour/bitter/salty, solid/liquid/gas

**Hyponymy** (class inclusion): cat < mammal < animal

**Meronymy** (part-whole relation): line < stanza < poem

In the semantic relationships mentioned above, when different names for objects or items form a synonymous link, they do so based on similarities and functional aspects, creating equal-level groupings. In contrast, the distinction between antonym and contrast lies in the gradational nature within the second term's lexical units, where contrast is expressed as part of antonym. While contrast relies on a binary approach, antonym is established through a more precise, direct relationship. The

classification nature of hyponymy, with its association to class membership, and the phenomenon of meronymy, which signifies part-whole relationships, has been thoroughly examined.

Synonymy, antonymy, and contrast are considered equal relationships. In the example provided, the words “sofa” and “couch” form a synonymous relationship on an equal level, whereas “cat” and “mammal” do not create a direct hyponym relationship. This is because “cat” is a hyponym of “mammal,” and “mammal” is a hypernym of “cat.”

Despite being discussed for centuries, semantics remains a relevant and evolving field, continuously generating new discussions and debates. In Uzbek linguistics, the analysis of semantic relationships between words has deepened in recent years. While studies in the 1970s and 1980s focused on antonymy, synonymy, and homonymy, since 1995, research has expanded to include phonological, lexical, and stylistic levels, covering categories like gradation (graduonymy), hyponymy, and paronymy. This increased attention to semantic relationships reflects a desire to explore the subtleties of meaning in language and speech.

Uzbek language’s unique qualities and the national and cultural richness of the Uzbek people are vividly reflected in our speech. The exploration of semantic relationships reveals intriguing and distinctive insights, distinguishing Uzbek from other world languages. Research findings show that semantic relationships found in other languages, their connections with different semantic categories, and their similarities and differences have been meticulously studied. Notably, the relationship termed “meronymy” by English linguists has been studied as “paronymy” [9] in Uzbek linguistics, demonstrating the unparalleled uniqueness of the Uzbek language. Within the phenomenon of synonymy, we can observe that extensive research has been conducted not only by international linguists but also by Uzbek linguists. In Uzbek linguistics, synonymy has been thoroughly studied through examples of lexical, syntactic, and morphological units. Definitions of synonymy in Uzbek linguistics primarily emphasize the semantic similarity of lexemes, followed by their generality and semantic resemblance.

In early definitions of synonymy, the phenomenon was typically characterized by the exact similarity of the meanings expressed by lexemes. Synonymy refers to the semantic relationship between two or more words that are written differently, have the same or similar meanings, and belong to the same part of speech [10]. In other words, synonymous lexical units are considered semantic equivalents. However, synonymous words do not always exhibit interchangeable usage in every context. For instance, in English, the verbs “to employ” and “to use” can function as synonyms in the following sentence:

We used/employed effective strategies to solve the problem.

However, in the following sentence, these verbs do not function as synonyms, and only “to use” is appropriate:

We used a jimmy bar to open the door.

Substituting “employ” in this context would sound odd and confuse the listener. Synonyms that can replace each other in any context are referred to as complete synonyms, where one word fully conveys the meaning of the other to the reader.

Recent studies on synonymy have moved away from the notion of “identical meaning”, instead focusing on subtle semantic differences, stylistic nuances, and connotations. These aspects are now given special attention, reflecting a more nuanced understanding of synonymy [11].

The term “near-synonymy” or “plesionymy” is relatively new in Uzbek linguistics. It refers to the phenomenon where certain words can be defined similarly (expressed with words of similar meaning), but substituting them in some contexts is not appropriate and leads to a loss of logical coherence. For example, in English, the phrase “a pretty/handsome man” both conveys the meaning of “a good-looking man.” However, the word “pretty” seems unsuitable when referring to a man, and substituting it in this context disrupts logical harmony.

## CONCLUSION

The semantic differences between near-synonyms can be categorized as follows:

1. **Degree of similarity:** “weep” (*to shed tears*) – implies more intense emotion. “sob” (*to cry with gasping breaths*) – denotes intermittent crying. “cry” (*to wail loudly*) – a general term for crying.
2. **Aspects:** “calm” – *quiet*, referring to a state. “placid” – *serene*, referring to temperament or character.
3. **Subtle differences in prototypical meaning:** “brave” – *bold, strong*, emphasizing physical courage. “courageous” – *fearless, valiant*, emphasizing moral or mental bravery.

In Uzbek linguistics, research dedicated to this type of semantic relationship – plesionymy – is quite limited. This is because many linguists prefer to categorize such relationships as simple synonymy. Nevertheless, linguist J. Djumaboeva [12] has provided a specific definition for this phenomenon in her research and substantiated its presence in Uzbek linguistics with relevant examples. This exploration of near-synonymy helps highlight subtle semantic differences and improves precision and expressiveness in language use. During our research, we have witnessed that, while translating the text into other languages several words which are semantically related to each other, are suggested. In order to create adequate translation we tried to learn the meaning of each word and chose the closest in meaning.

Table 1

|    | Original word in the context  | The synonyms | Adequate version | Explanation   |
|----|---|--------------|------------------|---|
| 1. | Zamonasining boy va go'zal shahri bo'lgan Samarqandni arab bosqinchilari <i>ochko'zlarcha talaydilar</i> [13] | ravage       | ravage           | To rob with violence. Ex: <i>The conquering army ravaged the country.</i> |
| 2. |   | destroy      |                  | To ruin; put an end to the existence of (something).                      |



|    |  |                  |  |  |
|----|--|------------------|--|--|
|    |  |                  |  | Ex: <i>The fire destroyed most of the building.</i>  |
| 3. |  | <b>damage</b>    |  | this term in general situations where harm or injury has occurred to an object, person, or place. It can vary in severity and is not as intense as 'ravage' or 'destruction' |
| 4. |  | <b>ruin</b>      |  | To damage sth or a completely negative effect on it so that it is no longer at all successful, enjoyable or useful. Ex: <i>The bad weather completely ruined our trip.</i>   |
| 5. |  | <b>wreck</b>     |  | To ruin sth completely. It is especially used to talk about important things in people's lives. Ex: <i>A serious injury in 2006 threatened to wreck his career.</i>          |
|    |  | <b>devastate</b> |  | to destroy a place or thing completely or cause great damage   |

In the given context, it becomes necessary to reflect the situation where the military forces, that is, the enemies, ruthlessly torture the people, take the visible valuables of the city with them, and turn the ancient beautiful city into a ruin. In this process, it is crucial to select the most appropriate word from the series of synonym words to accurately convey the writer's intended message to the reader of the second language. Compared to other words, we decided to choose "to ravage" because its definition includes "to rob with violence."

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