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Semantic and Classificatory Analysis of the Adjective in Uzbek and Turkish

ABDURAKHMANOVA MUKADDAS TURSUNALIYEVNA
National University of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

*This article examines the adjective in Uzbek and Turkish – two major representatives of the Turkic group within the Altaic language family – through a comparative-typological approach, focusing on its semantic (meaning) and classificatory-categorial properties. Based on empirical material from both languages, the study provides a detailed analysis of the lexical-semantic grouping of adjectives, their semantic structure, the organization of the semantic field, shifts in meaning (metaphorization and synesthesia), intensity of meaning, as well as the intersection of numerals and adjectives (*sayısıfatları*) in Uzbek and Turkish linguistics.*

Keywords: Adjective, semantics, lexical-semantic group, sayısıfatları (numeral adjectives), semantic field, synesthesia, metaphor, graduonymy, comparative-typological analysis.

INTRODUCTION

As is well known, the Uzbek and Turkish languages, which are the largest and most developed representatives of the Turkic language group, share common genetic roots, grammatical structure, and lexical-semantic foundation. Throughout the linguistic evolution of both languages, mechanisms were formed for perceiving the surrounding world, as well as naming and describing various attributes, properties, states, shapes, and quantitative metrics of objects and phenomena. In this context, lexical-semantic units designating attributes – adjectives

(referred to in Turkish grammar as *Sıfat* or *Ön ad*) – stand out for their distinct attributive and predicative capabilities. From the perspective of linguistic semantics, adjectives constitute a complex categorial system that directly or indirectly reflects the qualities, features, and characteristics of objects. The semantic realm of the adjective is not confined solely to expressing static attributes of objective reality (such as color, dimension, and taste); it also fulfills an important anthropocentric function in conveying subjective human evaluations, emotional-psychological states, as well as social, moral, and intellectual qualities.

In Turkology and comparative-typological linguistics, the study of the adjective has long been considered one of the key theoretical issues. In the development of Turkic grammar, the traditional classification of all independent parts of speech (excluding the verb) under a single overarching group of nominals (*isimler*) is theoretically justified. This is due to the fact that in Uzbek and Turkish, parts of speech are not delimited strictly on the basis of rigid morphological markers, as is typical in Indo-European languages. For example, units such as *chol* (old man), *kampir* (old woman), *taxta* (board/plank), and *oltin* (gold), depending on their syntactic position, can function either as nouns (*taxta*, *oltin*) or as adjectives (*taxtako'prik* — wooden bridge, *oltinsoat* – gold watch). This phenomenon is explained not by the processes of "substantivization" or "adjectivization," but rather by the fact that the "nominal" or "adjectival" meaning of a word is realized directly within the context of a phrase. As noted by the Turkologist M. Ergin, in Turkish, words such as adjectives, pronouns, and adverbs are classified under the general term *İsimler* (Nominals). This, in turn, demonstrates the impossibility of drawing a rigid line between morphology and syntax in Uzbek and Turkish, indicating that the grammatical properties and relationships characteristic of nouns apply fully to the category of adjectives as well.

As highlighted in the scholarly works of such Turkologists as Muharrem Ergin, Prof. Zeynep Korkmaz, and Mehmet Hengirmen, adjectives cannot exist in isolation (outside syntactic connection); they manifest their true categorial-semantic and

syntactic function only when combined with a noun (*isim*) and subordinated to it. Otherwise, adjectives rapidly undergo substantivization (the process of converting into a noun). However, despite Uzbek and Turkish belonging to the same language family, their modern literary standards and national linguistic traditions display a number of typological and conceptual differences in their semantic and classificatory approaches to the adjective. For instance, while in Uzbek linguistics (A. Khojiyev, R. Sayfullayeva, et al.) adjectives and numerals are strictly differentiated as independent parts of speech with distinct semantic-morphological boundaries, in the Turkish grammatical tradition (*Türk Dil Bilgisi*), numerals expressing quantity and order are studied not as a separate part of speech, but as a component of qualifying adjectives (*Belirtme Sıfatları*) under the term *Sayı Sıfatları* (numeral adjectives).

The relevance and objective of this research paper consist in a comprehensive investigation of the lexical-semantic field, semantic structure, and development (metaphorization, synesthesia, intensity) of the adjective in Uzbek and Turkish based on comparative-typological principles, as well as a scientific analysis and synthesis of the categorial-classificatory differences regarding the intersection of numerals and adjectives in the grammar and lexicography of both languages.

Depending on the nature of the attribute expressed, adjectives in Uzbek and Turkish form a complex lexical-semantic system and overlapping semantic fields. In both languages, according to the nature of the feature and the source of its perception, adjectives are divided into the following main lexical-semantic groups (LSGs):

Semantics of color, shape, and size

Attributes perceived through the visual organs constitute the most ancient, stable, and rich lexical layer in both languages:

- **Color adjectives**: In Uzbek and Turkish, this group traces back to Common Turkic roots. Uzbek: *qizil*, *ko‘k*, *yashil*, *sariq*, *qora*, *oq*, *jigarrang*, *kulrang*. Turkish: *kırmızı/al*,

mavi/gök, *yeşil*, *sarı*, *kara/siyah*, *ak/beyaz*, *kahverengi*, *gri*. In Turkish, synonymous pairs such as *kırmızı/al, siyah/kara, beyaz/ak* are preserved more actively than in Uzbek and display a distinct stylistic differentiation; for example, *al* and *kara* are used more frequently in poetic discourse.

- **Adjectives of shape and size**: Uzbek: *katta, kichik, keng, tor, uzoq, yaqin, to'g'ri, egri, chuqur, kalta*. Turkish: *büyük, küçük, geniş, dar, uzak, yakın, düz, eğri, derin, kısa*.

Semantics of taste and odor

A semantic group perceived through various human sensory organs: *shirin – tatlı* (sweet), *achchiq – acı* (bitter/spicy), *nordon – ekşi* (sour), *tuzsiz – tuzsuz* (unsalted/bland), *xushbo'y – kokulu/hoşkokulu* (fragrant/scented), *sassiq/badbo'y – kötükokulu* (foul-smelling).

Semantics of touch and temperature

issiq – sıcak (hot/warm), *sovuq – soğuk* (cold), *yumshoq – yumuşak* (soft), *qattiq – sert/katı* (hard/firm).

Anthropocentric semantics (human character, moral, and mental state)

An important semantic group expressing the social, moral, intellectual, and psychological features of a person, reflecting the national specificity of the language: *aqlli – akıllı* (smart/intelligent), *dono – bilge* (wise), *kamtar – mütevazı* (humble/modest), *saxiy – cömert* (generous), *yalqov/dangasa – tembel* (lazy), *mehnatkash – çalışkan* (hardworking).

Emotional-psychological state and character

xursand/shod – mutlu/neşeli (joyful/happy), *g'amgin – üzgün* (sad/gloomy), *jahldor – öfkeli* (angry), *bosiq – sakin/ağırbaşlı* (calm/composed).

A key classificatory-conceptual difference lies in the treatment of numerals within the category of adjectives in Turkish grammar. One of the most significant typological and categorial distinctions in Uzbek and Turkish grammar manifests

in the grammatical status assigned to units expressing quantitative attributes. In Uzbek linguistics (A. Khojiyev, R. Sayfullayeva, et al.), numerals and adjectives are categorized as separate, strictly demarcated independent parts of speech. Adjectives denote qualities and features, whereas numerals express quantity and order. In Turkish linguistics (M. Ergin, Z. Korkmaz, M. Hengirmen), however, the numeral is not a separate part of speech, but is studied as part of qualifying adjectives (*Belirtme Sıfatları*) under the designation *Sayı Sıfatları*. In Turkish, numeral adjectives (*Sayı Sıfatları*) are subdivided into 5 sub-groups based on their semantic and morphological properties:

1. **Asıl Sayı Sıfatları (cardinal numeral adjectives)**: Indicate the exact quantity of objects (*ikisaat*, *beşmilyon ton*, *üçkitap*).
2. **Sıra Sayı Sıfatları (ordinal numeral adjectives)**: Indicate the sequence or order of objects (*birincigün*, *1. qat*, *12'inci bölük*, *üçüncü kat*).
3. **Üleştirme Sayı Sıfatları (distributive numeral adjectives)**: Indicate the distribution or allocation of objects (*üçerkişi* – three people each, *ikişerelma* – two apples each).
4. **Topluluk Sayı Sıfatları (collective numeral adjectives)**: Indicate a group of homogenous objects (*ikizkardeş*, *dördüzbebek*).
5. **Kesir Sayı Sıfatları (fractional numeral adjectives)**: Indicate a fraction or proportional amount (*üçtebir*, *yüzdealtı*).

This approach in Turkish grammar is grounded in the conceptual principle: "a word that precedes a noun, modifies any of its attributes (quality or quantity), and cannot be used in isolation is an *ön ad* (adjective)".

In both Uzbek and Turkish, adjectives are used not only in their primary (literal) sense, but also develop various figurative meanings (metaphor and synesthesia) as a result of semantic evolution. The transfer of an attribute associated with one sensory organ to another sensory organ occurs in both languages according to the same linguistic model:

1. **Transfer from taste semantics to hearing/speech and perception semantics**: *shirinkalom*, *achchiqhaqiqat*, *achchiqsavol*, *tatlıdilli*, *acıgerçek*, *acısoru*.
2. **Transfer from state semantics to socio-psychological relationships**: *sovuqmunosabat*, *issiqchehra*, *qattiqqo'l, soğukdavranış*, *sıcakkanlı*, *sert/katımizaç*.
3. **Transfer from concrete to abstract meaning (metaphorization)** – transfer from physical properties to spiritual, intellectual, and psychological concepts: *o'tkirzihn* (transfer from a sharp weapon to intellectual potential), *og'irbosiq* (transfer from physical weight to human temperament), *yengil takas* (transfer from physical weight to irresponsibility); *keskinzekâ, ağırbaşlı, hafifmeşrep*.

Semantic intensity, graduation, and morphosemantic typology (the Affix -roq and analytical mechanisms)

One of the most salient features of adjective semantics is the capability to express an excess or deficiency of a trait relative to a norm, or its comparison with another object. One of the clearest morphosemantic and typological differences between Uzbek and Turkish lies in the mechanism of forming degrees of comparison (especially the comparative degree). In Uzbek linguistics, degrees of comparison (positive, comparative, superlative, diminutive) are designated as a distinct grammatical and semantic category. The synthetic morpheme – the affix *-roq*, which serves as the marker for the comparative degree – is active in Uzbek and directly signifies that a quality is present to a greater or lesser extent compared to another object (*katta-roq*, *yaxshi-roq*, *tez-roq*, *chiroyli-roq*). In literary Turkish, however, a synthetic comparative marker corresponding to *-roq* does not exist. In Turkish linguistics, the semantics of comparison and graduation are conveyed not via a morphemic (synthetic) method, but through a lexical-analytic construction. The semantic function performed by the synthetic affix *-roq* in Uzbek is fulfilled in Turkish by the analytical adverb (particle) *daha* placed before the adjective, alongside the ablative case (*-dan/-den*).

(Synthetic method): *Bu uykattaroq.* (Analytic method): *Bu evdahabüyük.*

Gulnora Azizadanaqlliroq. – Alim Adil'dendahaakıllı. (This demonstrates that while Uzbek has preserved synthetic markers in degrees of quality, literary Turkish relies more heavily on analytical constructions to express comparison).

In both languages, the superlative degree and intensification of a trait are accomplished via lexical and morphosemantic methods:

- **Prefixal (morphosemantic) intensification**: Turkish actively employs intensification by repeating the first syllable using the consonants *m, p, s, r* (*açık → apaçık, temiz → tertemiz, yeşil → yemyeşil, mor → mosmor*). In Uzbek, this method also exists (*ochiq → op-ochiq, toza → top-toza, yashil → yam-yashil*), but forms containing the elements *-s-* and *-r-* (*koskolay*, *tertemiz*) are less characteristic of Uzbek.
- **Lexical-analytic superlative degree**: *enggo'zal*, *judakatta*, *nihoyatdaaqlli*, *g'irtyolg'on*, *engüzel*, *çokbüyük*, *son dereceakıllı*, *bambaşkabir durum*.

In expressing diminished intensity or diminutive semantics to indicate a minor deviation from the norm, both languages employ specific affixes: In Uzbek: Suffixes *-ish, -simon, -mtir*, as well as occasionally the affix *-roq*, weaken the intensity (*yashilish*, *nordonroq*, *ekshimtir*, *sarimtir*). In Turkish: Suffixes *-cik, -ce, -imsi, -imtırak* fulfill this semantic function (*küçücük, irice, yeşilimsi, ekşimtırak*).

A distinctive semantic property of the adjective is its substantivization in spoken and written speech. In both languages, when an adjective omits the noun it modifies, it absorbs the semantic and syntactic burden (case, possessive, and plural markers) of that noun: *yaxshitopibgapirar, yomonqopibgapirar* (instead of *yaxshiodam/yomonodam*). *İhtiyarlarayardımetmeliyiz* (instead of *İhtiyarinsanlara*). Substantivization via the adoption of case and plural affixes: *yashilniyaxshiko'raman* (instead of *yashilrangni*). *Yeşiliseverim*

(instead of *Yeşilrengi*). This process in both languages proves that the adjective category is a flexible, open categorial system capable of continuously entering into semantic relationships with nouns and adverbs.

CONCLUSION

A comprehensive comparative-typological, semantic, and classificatory analysis of the adjective in Uzbek and Turkish reveals clear patterns and specific linguistic features of the attribute-expression system in these languages belonging to the Common Turkic group.

The lexical-semantic grouping of adjectives and their semantic fields in Uzbek and Turkish share a unified conceptual and historical-genetic foundation. In both languages, adjectives utilize identical lexical-morphological models and categorial properties to reflect static and dynamic features of objects and phenomena in objective reality, as well as the psycho-social and intellectual states of human beings.

The main theoretical distinction in linguistic traditions and grammatical classification lies in the categorial status assigned to expressions of quantitative attributes (numerals). While Uzbek linguistics treats adjectives and numerals as independent parts of speech with strict semantic and morphological boundaries, the Turkish grammatical tradition (*Türk Dil Bilgisi*) does not view units designating quantity and order as a separate part of speech. Instead, they are examined within qualifying adjectives (*Belirtme Sıfatları*) under the designation *Sayı Sıfatları*, subdivided into 5 sub-groups (*asıl*, *sıra*, *üleştirme*, *topluluk*, *kesir*). This stems from the broader categorial principle of Turkish grammar: "a word that precedes a noun and defines any of its attributes is an *ön ad* (adjective)".

In the semantic development of adjectives, mechanisms of meaning transfer (metaphorization and synesthesia) proceed in parallel across both languages following identical cognitive patterns. The transfer of sensory attributes (*shirinkalom/tatlıdilli*, *achchiqhaqiqat/acıgerçek*), as well as the shift from concrete physical properties to abstract-psychological concepts

(*o'tkirzihn/keskinzekâ, sovuqmunosabat/soğukdavranış*), reconfirms the shared logical and figurative mindset of the Uzbek and Turkish peoples.

The means for expressing an augmented trait (intensification /*pekiştirme*) and a diminished trait (attenuation/*küçültme*) possess rich morphological and lexical resources. Although prefixal intensification via first-syllable reduplication with *m, p, s, r* consonants (*yam-yashil/yemyeşil*, *op-ochiq/apaçık*) is active in both languages, forms with *-s-* and *-r-* elements (*koskolay*, *tertemiz*) demonstrate greater prevalence and specificity in Turkish compared to Uzbek.

The intrinsic link between adjectives and nouns in both languages, along with the phenomenon wherein an adjective drops its noun in context and assumes all of its grammatical and semantic functions (substantivization), demonstrates that the category of adjectives is an adaptable and open categorial system.

In conclusion, the semantic and classificatory investigation of the adjective in Uzbek and Turkish serves as a vital theoretical and practical resource for comparative Turkic grammar, lexicography, and translation studies. In the development of Turkic grammar, the traditional classification of all independent parts of speech (excluding the verb) under a single overarching group of nominals (*isimler*) is theoretically justified. This is explained by the fact that parts of speech in Uzbek and Turkish are not delineated solely on the basis of rigid morphological markers, as seen in Indo-European languages. This, in turn, underscores the impossibility of establishing a strict boundary between morphology and syntax in Uzbek and Turkish, proving that the grammatical properties and relationships inherent to nouns are fully applicable to the category of adjectives as well.

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ABDURAKHMANOVA MUKADDAS TURSUNALIYEVNA
ACTING PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF UZBEK LINGUISTICS,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF UZBEKISTAN (NUUZ),
DOCTOR OF PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES.
E-MAIL: <MABDURAXMANOVA20@GMAIL.COM>
ORCID: 0009-0004-6987-3501
SCIENCE ID: DTV-1026-0002