

A Linguocultural and Semantic Study of the Concept of “Wealth” in English and Uzbek Languages

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the semantic, etymological, and linguocultural features of lexical units related to the concept of “wealth/boylik” in English and Uzbek. The study is aimed at elucidating the origin, historical roots, and the stages of semantic development of the lexemes “wealth” and boylik within the modern language system. It consistently examines the primary meanings of these lexemes, their synonymic and antonymic relations, denotative and connotative aspects, as well as their facets connected with socio-ethical views in society. Particular emphasis is placed on how the concept of wealth/boylik is expressed in English and Uzbek proverbs, highlighting the role of synonymous units shaped by national mentality, values, and life experience. The article analyzes the concept of boylik not merely as an economic indicator, but as a linguistic unit intrinsically linked with moral, spiritual, and cultural values. The research findings reveal both common and distinctive features of the concept of wealth in the two languages and demonstrate its practical significance in the fields of linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication. Thus, the article offers an in-depth linguistic, cultural, and cognitive analysis of the lexical-semantic characteristics of the English “wealth” and the Uzbek boylik, clarifying their etymology, polysemy, synonymy-antonym relations, and their use in aphorisms as a reflection of values embedded in popular consciousness. Analyses based on aphorisms, proverbs, and wise sayings clearly demonstrate the positive and negative connotative

layers of the concept of wealth. According to the research findings, the positive meanings of wealth are interpreted as prosperity, the fruit of diligence, and a symbol of independence and freedom. At the same time, its negative aspects are reflected in meanings such as arrogance, extravagance, alienation from spiritual values, and the intensification of social inequality within society.

Keywords: Wealth, lexeme, *bisot*, *bijozat*, state, proverb, concept, language, linguists

INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, the term concept is interpreted as a cognitive unit existing in human consciousness that reflects the worldview, values, and cultural experience of a particular people. Within each language system, concepts are manifested through a specific lexical-semantic field. One such semantically complex unit is the concept of “wealth/*boylik*,” which encompasses distinctive layers of meaning in different languages, representing material prosperity, property, affluence, and sometimes even happiness. In popular consciousness, wealth is primarily regarded as a notion expressing material and economic status. It functions as a key factor in satisfying an individual’s daily needs and achieving well-being in various spheres of life. However, it is insufficient to evaluate this lexeme solely as an economic category; without a comprehensive analysis of its role in human life, its spiritual and emotional content, as well as its philosophical and psychological interpretations, it is difficult to fully reveal the concept of wealth as a complete cultural phenomenon.

The research findings illuminate both the common and distinctive features of the concept of wealth in English and Uzbek, demonstrating its practical significance for linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication. This article examines the lexical-semantic characteristics of the English “wealth” and the Uzbek *boylik* from linguistic, cultural, and cognitive perspectives. The etymology of the words, cases of polysemy, and synonymic and antonymic relations are analyzed on the basis of contextual usage. The study identifies not only the

content of the concept as a lexical unit, but also how, through its usage in aphorisms, proverbs, and wise sayings, it is associated with particular values and perceptions in popular consciousness. On the basis of these sources, the positive connotative layers of the concept of wealth (prosperity, the result of diligence, a symbol of freedom) and its negative connotative layers (arrogance, extravagance, the intensification of social inequality) are distinguished. The article elucidates how the value of wealth, the ways of attaining it, the place of a wealthy person in society, and attitudes toward them are reflected through various linguistic units in English and Uzbek aphorisms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The lexeme wealth is defined in English explanatory dictionaries as a noun with a rich etymological background and evolving semantic scope. It originates from the Old English *wela*, which denoted “well-being,” “prosperity,” and “welfare.” This form derives from the Proto-Germanic root *wel-*, meaning “well” or “in a good condition.” Etymologically, the word is closely related to the adjective *well*, indicating that its earliest semantic content was not confined to material riches but encompassed a broader notion of human well-being and favorable life conditions [1: 876].

Over time, the meaning of wealth has undergone semantic narrowing, increasingly emphasizing material and economic aspects. In modern English, authoritative dictionaries consistently define the term in relation to financial abundance and possession of valuable resources. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes wealth as “an abundance of valuable possessions or money; the state of being rich,” highlighting both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of prosperity [2]. Similarly, *Merriam-Webster* defines it as “abundance of valuable material possessions or resources; affluence,” thereby underscoring both ownership and accessibility of resources [3]. The *Cambridge Dictionary* offers a more concise interpretation, defining wealth as “a large amount of money or valuable possessions that someone has” [4].

Despite this material orientation, the lexeme retains its broader, metaphorical meanings in contemporary usage. Expressions such as a wealth of information illustrate the extension of the concept beyond economic value to denote abundance in intellectual or experiential domains. This semantic flexibility reflects the polysemous nature of the term and suggests that the conceptualization of wealth in English continues to integrate both tangible and intangible dimensions.

From a linguo-cultural perspective, the diachronic development of the lexeme wealth demonstrates a shift from a holistic understanding of well-being toward a more economically centered interpretation, while still preserving traces of its original, more abstract sense. This evolution mirrors broader socio-cultural transformations in which material prosperity has become a central indicator of success, yet alternative forms of “wealth” remain embedded in language and discourse. In contemporary English, the semantic scope of wealth extends beyond purely economic meaning. It may denote material prosperity, financial capital, and assets, but it is also used metaphorically to express abundance in non-material domains (e.g., knowledge, experience, opportunities). Thus, similar to the Uzbek *boylik*, the lexeme wealth demonstrates both denotative (economic prosperity, property) and connotative (success, power, stability, well-being) dimensions within the linguistic system.

In the differentiation of the concept of “wealth” in English and Uzbek linguocultures, economic, cultural, and ethical aspects also play a significant role. Explanatory dictionaries were used in analyzing the lexeme *boylik* in both languages. According to dictionary sources, in Uzbek the word *boylik* is a derived noun formed from the adjective *boy* with the derivational suffix *-lik*, and it carries the lexical meanings of “property, the state of being wealthy, a collection of valuable items.” Initially, we attempted to examine the lexicon of *boylik* in Uzbek through the *Explanatory Dictionary of Active Words of the Modern Uzbek Language* [5: 185].

In order to examine the content of this word more thoroughly, we sought to identify its synonymous units. We referred to the *Educational Dictionary of Synonyms of the Uzbek*

Language authored by Otabek Shukurov and Bashorat Bahridinova [5: 214]. It was determined that the words *davlat*, *bisot*, *bizoat*, *mol-mulk*, and *dunyo* are also used in the same meaning. However, taking into account the features of homonymy and figurative meaning associated with these words, they were analyzed as follows:

- ***Davlat*** – wealth, riches, property. The proverbs illustrate that material wealth is traditionally viewed as something valuable yet temporary, whereas knowledge is considered lasting and more enduring. Literary usage also shows that *davlat* may refer to a source of income or material prosperity.
- ***Davlat*** (figurative) – Spiritual wealth, happiness, good fortune. In proverbial usage, the word extends beyond material possessions and refers to non-material blessings. Health, unity, harmony, and positive intentions are conceptualized as forms of wealth. In this sense, *davlat* expresses a broader understanding of prosperity that includes moral and social well-being.
- ***Davlatqushi*** (figurative) – literally “the bird of fortune,” denotes sudden luck or unexpected good fortune. The expression conveys the idea that fortune may arrive unexpectedly and should be valued and not carelessly lost.

These examples demonstrate that within its homonymous structure, the word *davlat* incorporates the meaning of “wealth,” while simultaneously developing multiple figurative interpretations. It encompasses not only material prosperity but also abstract notions such as spiritual richness, happiness, luck, health, and virtuous intention. Thus, in Uzbek linguoculture, wealth is conceptualized as both an economic and a moral category. *Dunyo* – II. Wealth, riches. In proverbial discourse, the word can signify material possessions and worldly goods, often contrasted with spiritual or afterlife values, emphasizing the transient nature of worldly wealth.

Furthermore, the definitions and examples associated with the word *bisot* demonstrate that “wealth” may appear in both individual and collective forms, referring either to personal

property or to the resources and assets belonging to a particular place or community. Overall, these lexical units expand the semantic field of *boylık* and reveal its multidimensional character in Uzbek linguocultural thought.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis of synonymous units related to the lexeme *boylık* (wealth) in the Uzbek language, based on the *Educational Dictionary of Synonyms* by Shukurov & Bahridinova (p. 214), reveals that the semantic field of “wealth” is both broad and multidimensional. The identified synonyms – *davlat*, *bisot*, *bizoat*, *mol-mulk*, and *dunyo* – do not function as exact equivalents but rather represent different conceptual layers of wealth within Uzbek linguoculture.

First, the lexeme *davlat* demonstrates a particularly rich semantic structure due to its polysemy and figurative extensions. In its primary meaning, it denotes material wealth, property, and economic prosperity. However, proverbial and literary contexts show a clear cultural tendency to relativize material wealth by contrasting it with knowledge, wisdom, and morality. This suggests that, while wealth is recognized as valuable, it is not considered the ultimate or most stable form of value.

Moreover, in its figurative usage, *davlat* expands to include spiritual wealth, such as happiness, health, unity, and good fortune. Expressions like *davlatqushi* (“bird of fortune”) further reinforce the idea that wealth may be unpredictable and transient, emphasizing a culturally embedded belief in luck and fate. These findings indicate that *davlat* operates as a key cultural concept, integrating both material and non-material dimensions of prosperity.

Second, the synonym *dunyo* introduces a philosophical and evaluative dimension to the concept of wealth. While it can denote material possessions, it is frequently used in opposition to spiritual or eternal values, especially in proverbial discourse. This reflects a worldview in which worldly wealth is seen as temporary and secondary, reinforcing moral and religious perspectives within Uzbek culture.

Third, the lexeme *bisot* highlights the contextual and distributive nature of wealth. It may refer to individual property or collective resources, thereby extending the concept of wealth beyond personal ownership to include communal and environmental assets. This suggests that wealth in Uzbek thought is not solely individualistic but can also be understood in a shared or social sense.

The analysis demonstrates that the Uzbek conceptualization of wealth is not limited to economic capital. Instead, it encompasses a wide spectrum of meanings, including material possessions, spiritual well-being, moral values, social harmony, and even luck or fate. The presence of homonymy and figurative meanings within these lexical units significantly enriches the semantic field and reflects the cultural depth and value system embedded in the language.

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrates that the concept of wealth (*boylik*) in Uzbek linguoculture is far more complex than a purely economic notion. Through the analysis of synonymous units such as *davlat*, *bisot*, *bizoat*, *mol-mulk*, and *dunyo*, it becomes evident that wealth is conceptualized as a multifaceted and culturally embedded phenomenon. Each lexical unit contributes a distinct semantic nuance, collectively forming a rich and layered understanding of prosperity.

In particular, the word *davlat* emerges as a central and culturally significant lexeme, reflecting both material and spiritual dimensions of wealth. Its figurative uses reveal that prosperity is not limited to financial resources but extends to include health, harmony, moral integrity, and good fortune. Similarly, the usage of *dunyo* highlights a philosophical perspective in which material wealth is perceived as temporary and secondary in comparison to enduring spiritual values. The lexeme *bisot*, in turn, underscores the social and collective aspects of wealth, suggesting that prosperity may also be shared and context-dependent.

Taken together, these findings indicate that Uzbek linguistic consciousness does not isolate wealth as a purely material category. Instead, it integrates economic, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions, reflecting a holistic worldview shaped by cultural traditions, proverbs, and collective experience. Wealth is thus understood not only as possession, but also as a state of well-being, ethical balance, and meaningful existence.

In conclusion, the semantic field of *boylik* reveals that language serves as a mirror of cultural values. The Uzbek perspective on wealth emphasizes moderation, transience, and moral responsibility, offering a broader and more human-centered interpretation of prosperity. This insight provides a valuable foundation for further comparative studies, particularly in exploring how different languages encode and prioritize material and non-material aspects of human life.

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