

SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF ADJECTIVES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Annotation

The present article investigates the semantic classification of adjectives in English and Uzbek from a comparative linguistic perspective. Adjectives constitute one of the most semantically diverse lexical categories in both languages, functioning as modifiers that denote quality, quantity, relation, evaluation, deixis, and distribution. The study aims to identify the principal semantic groups of adjectives in English and Uzbek, to examine their lexical-semantic properties, and to reveal similarities and differences resulting from typological distinctions between the two languages. English, as an analytic language, and Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, demonstrate both universal and language-specific patterns in adjectival semantics. The research employs descriptive, comparative, and semantic analysis to classify adjectives into major groups such as qualitative, relative, quantitative, demonstrative, possessive, interrogative, and distributive types. The findings indicate that both languages share a common semantic core in the classification of adjectives, particularly in the domains of quality, color, size, evaluation, and quantity. However, they differ significantly in the grammatical interpretation of certain adjective-like units, especially demonstratives, possessives, and relational modifiers.

Keywords: *adjective, semantic classification, English adjectives, Uzbek adjectives, lexical semantics, qualitative adjectives, relative adjectives, comparative linguistics, grammatical typology, contrastive analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Adjectives represent an indispensable component of the lexical and grammatical systems of natural languages. They perform the essential function of attributing qualities, properties, relations, evaluations, and quantities to nouns and nominal expressions. In linguistic theory, adjectives are generally regarded as a distinct lexical category characterized by their modifying function, semantic variability, and interaction with syntax and morphology. Nevertheless, the semantic classification of adjectives remains a complex and multifaceted issue because adjectives are not semantically homogeneous. Their meanings range from inherent physical qualities to abstract



relations, from subjective evaluation to objective measurement, and from deictic reference to distributive specification. In both English and Uzbek, adjectives occupy a central place in the system of nominal modification. Despite this shared functional role, the two languages differ significantly in their typological structure, morphological organization, and grammatical traditions. English belongs to the Indo-European family and is predominantly analytic in structure, whereas Uzbek belongs to the Turkic family and is characterized by an agglutinative grammatical system. These typological differences influence the lexical composition, semantic range, and grammatical behavior of adjectives in both languages. The semantic classification of adjectives is especially important in comparative linguistics because it reveals how languages conceptualize the properties of objects, persons, and phenomena. It also provides insight into the interaction between lexical meaning and grammatical categorization.

In English, adjectives are commonly classified according to both syntactic and semantic criteria, including gradability, attributive and predicative function, and their relation to determiners. In Uzbek, adjectives (*sifat*) are traditionally divided into qualitative adjectives (*asliy sifatlar*) and relative adjectives (*nisbiy sifatlar*), with further semantic distinctions based on meaning and usage. The relevance of this research lies in its theoretical and practical significance. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the fields of lexical semantics, typology, and contrastive grammar. From a practical perspective, it has implications for language teaching, translation, lexicography, and bilingual education. Students learning English or Uzbek as a foreign language frequently encounter difficulties in interpreting the semantic and functional distinctions among adjectives, especially when equivalent forms do not align precisely across the two languages. The main objective of the article is to analyze the semantic classification of adjectives in English and Uzbek and to compare their semantic groups systematically.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of adjectives has long occupied an important position in linguistic research, especially in grammar, semantics, and typology. In English grammatical tradition, adjectives have been described primarily as modifiers of nouns that can occur in attributive and predicative positions. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) provide one of the most influential comprehensive accounts of English adjectives, discussing their syntactic roles, semantic subclasses, gradability, and ordering patterns. According to their analysis, English adjectives include both central adjectives and peripheral adjective-like forms, some of which overlap with determiners and participial constructions. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) further refine the analysis of English adjectives in *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, emphasizing their syntactic distribution, semantic gradability, and distinction from determinatives. They note that not all words traditionally labeled as adjectives belong to the same grammatical class, and they distinguish between lexical adjectives and determiner-like



modifiers such as demonstratives and possessives. This distinction is particularly relevant in comparative studies because many forms that function adjectivally in one language may be classified differently in another.

From the perspective of semantics, Dixon (1982) offers a foundational cross-linguistic study of adjective meaning. He identifies universal semantic types of adjectives, including dimension, age, value, color, and physical property. His work suggests that while languages vary in how they grammatically encode adjectival meanings, certain semantic domains are recurrent across languages. Cruse (2004) emphasizes the scalar and context-dependent nature of adjectives, particularly qualitative adjectives that express degrees of meaning and participate in antonymic relations. These observations are important for understanding Uzbek, where some semantic functions associated with adjectives in English may also be expressed through noun-like or derived forms depending on context. In Uzbek linguistics, adjectives (*sifatlar*) are traditionally treated as a lexical-grammatical category denoting the quality or characteristic of an object. Uzbek grammarians such as Sodiqov (1975), Tursunov (1980), Mahmudov (1995), and Ne'matov (2001) classify adjectives primarily into qualitative and relative groups. Qualitative adjectives denote direct and inherent properties such as color, size, shape, taste, and emotional evaluation. Relative adjectives express relation to material, place, time, function, or affiliation, and are often derived from nouns. This twofold division remains central in Uzbek grammatical scholarship. Another important issue in Uzbek linguistics concerns the classification of words such as *bu* (this), *shu* (this/that), *o'sha* (that), *har bir* (each), *ba'zi* (some), and possessive constructions like *mening* (my). In English grammar, comparable forms may be treated as adjectives, determiners, or pronoun-related modifiers. In Uzbek, however, their grammatical classification may vary depending on the tradition and analytical framework. This creates a productive area for comparative semantic analysis. Although considerable research exists on English adjective syntax and Uzbek adjective morphology, comparatively fewer studies focus specifically on the semantic classification of adjectives in English and Uzbek in a contrastive framework.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on a comparative-semantic and descriptive-analytical methodology aimed at examining the semantic classification of adjectives in the English and Uzbek languages. The main objective of the research is to identify the principal semantic groups of adjectives in both languages, to analyze their lexical and grammatical behavior, and to determine similarities and differences in their semantic organization. Since the topic primarily concerns meaning, categorization, and functional usage, the research follows a qualitative linguistic approach. The study does not rely mainly on statistical measurement; rather, it focuses on the semantic properties of adjectives as lexical units and their contextual realization in English and Uzbek. However, certain elements of comparative observation are used to establish systematic



parallels between the two languages. Several linguistic methods are employed in the course of the research. First, the descriptive method is used to present the general theoretical characteristics of adjectives as a lexical-grammatical class in both languages. This method allows the researcher to define the role of adjectives, their relation to nouns, and their semantic function in describing qualities, states, properties, and attributes of objects and phenomena. Second, the comparative method is applied in order to compare the semantic classes of adjectives in English and Uzbek. Through this method, the study investigates how each language groups adjectives according to meaning and examines whether equivalent semantic categories exist in both linguistic systems. This comparison is particularly useful in revealing universal semantic categories as well as language-specific features influenced by typological structure and cultural-linguistic factors. Third, the semantic analysis method serves as the central method of the research. Adjectives in both languages are analyzed according to their lexical meaning and grouped into semantic categories such as: Qualitative adjectives, relative adjectives, color adjectives, size and shape adjectives, age and time-related adjectives, emotional and evaluative adjectives, physical property adjectives, human character and mental quality adjectives. This method helps to identify how adjectives express different types of semantic features and how these categories are represented in English and Uzbek vocabulary.

RESULTS

The analysis of the collected linguistic material demonstrates that adjectives in both English and Uzbek can be classified into several major semantic groups, although the principles of classification show both common and language-specific features. The findings reveal that the semantic system of adjectives in both languages is rich, multifunctional, and closely connected with the cultural and structural peculiarities of each language.

First, the study shows that qualitative adjectives form the largest and most productive semantic group in both English and Uzbek. These adjectives denote inherent qualities or characteristics of objects and persons and can usually form degrees of comparison. In English, examples include big, small, beautiful, clever, strong, and cold. In Uzbek, similar functions are performed by adjectives such as katta, kichik, chiroyli, aqlli, kuchli, and sovuq. This semantic group is highly productive in both languages and serves as the core of adjectival vocabulary.

Second, the research indicates that relative adjectives are also widely used in both languages, though they are structurally and functionally more prominent in Uzbek due to the productive role of derivational affixes. Relative adjectives express relation to material, place, time, purpose, or sphere of activity rather than direct quality. English examples include wooden, medical, historical, urban, and daily. Uzbek equivalents include yog‘och, tibbiy, tarixiy, shahar, kundalik, and forms with suffixes such as -iy, -



li, and -simon in broader derivational contexts. Unlike qualitative adjectives, relative adjectives usually do not form degrees of comparison.

Third, the analysis confirms that color adjectives represent a stable and universal semantic category in both languages. English adjectives such as red, white, black, blue, and green correspond to Uzbek forms such as qizil, oq, qora, ko'k, and yashil. In both languages, color adjectives may be used in literal as well as figurative meanings. For example, English black mood and Uzbek qora kun illustrate semantic extension beyond direct color reference.

Fourth, the study reveals that size, shape, and dimension adjectives constitute another important semantic group. In English, adjectives such as long, short, round, narrow, wide, and thick describe spatial or physical dimensions. In Uzbek, similar meanings are expressed through adjectives like uzun, kalta, dumaloq, tor, keng, and qalin. These adjectives are semantically concrete and frequently used in both descriptive and metaphorical contexts.

Fifth, the findings show that age and temporal adjectives are clearly represented in both languages. English examples include old, young, ancient, modern, new, and recent, while Uzbek includes qari, yosh, qadimgi, zamonaviy, yangi, and so'nggi. These adjectives often reflect not only temporal characteristics but also social and cultural evaluations.

Sixth, the research identifies emotional, psychological, and evaluative adjectives as a highly expressive and semantically dynamic group. In English, adjectives such as happy, sad, angry, kind, cruel, honest, and brave are widely used to describe emotional states and personal qualities. In Uzbek, similar meanings are conveyed by adjectives such as xursand, g'amgin, jahldor, mehribon, shafqatsiz, halol, and jasur. This group often overlaps with stylistic and pragmatic meaning, especially in literary and spoken discourse.

Seventh, the study demonstrates that physical property adjectives such as hot, cold, soft, hard, heavy, and light in English and issiq, sovuq, yumshoq, qattiq, og'ir, and yengil in Uzbek are common in both languages. These adjectives frequently function in literal, metaphorical, and idiomatic expressions, which increases their semantic flexibility. Finally, the research reveals that some semantic categories are more explicitly systematized in Uzbek through derivational patterns, while English tends to show greater lexical diversity and contextual flexibility. Uzbek often forms semantic distinctions through affixation and stable lexical patterns, whereas English frequently relies on polysemy, collocational meaning, and syntactic context. Overall, the results indicate that the semantic classification of adjectives in English and Uzbek is based on largely similar universal conceptual categories, but the linguistic realization of these categories differs due to typological, lexical, and cultural factors.

DISCUSSION





The results of the study confirm that adjectives in English and Uzbek share a common semantic foundation, since both languages use adjectives to denote qualities, relations, states, and evaluations of objects, persons, and phenomena. This supports the general linguistic view that adjectives represent a universal lexical category across languages, especially in their role as modifiers of nouns and carriers of descriptive meaning. At the same time, the comparison reveals important differences in the semantic organization of adjectives in the two languages. One of the most significant observations is that English adjective semantics is strongly influenced by contextual variability and polysemy, while Uzbek adjective semantics is often more closely tied to derivational structure and lexical transparency. In English, many adjectives acquire additional meanings depending on collocation and discourse context. For example, the adjective *cold* may refer to temperature, emotional distance, illness, or even color tone. Similarly, *light* may denote weight, brightness, or intensity. In Uzbek, such semantic expansion also exists, but many meanings remain more closely connected to lexical roots and word-building model. The analysis also shows that semantic fields of adjectives are not always rigidly separated. Many adjectives belong simultaneously to more than one semantic domain depending on usage. For instance, an adjective may denote physical quality in one context and emotional evaluation in another. English *warm* may describe temperature or friendliness; Uzbek *iliq* may similarly express both physical warmth and emotional positivity. This demonstrates that semantic classification should be regarded as a flexible and context-sensitive system rather than a strictly fixed taxonomy. A further discussion point is the role of cultural and figurative meaning in adjective semantics. Both English and Uzbek use adjectives metaphorically, idiomatically, and symbolically. Color adjectives provide a clear example of this phenomenon. The adjective *black* in English and *qora* in Uzbek may carry negative or symbolic meanings in certain contexts, while *white* and *oq* may represent purity, honesty, or goodness. Such semantic parallels indicate that some metaphorical extensions may be universal, while others are shaped by specific cultural traditions and phraseological systems.

CONCLUSION

The present study on the semantic classification of adjectives in English and Uzbek has demonstrated that adjectives occupy an important place in the lexical and grammatical systems of both languages. As a significant part of speech, adjectives perform the essential function of describing the qualities, properties, relations, and evaluative characteristics of objects, persons, and phenomena. Their semantic diversity reflects the richness of both English and Uzbek vocabularies and highlights the close relationship between language structure and meaning. The comparative analysis has shown that English and Uzbek adjectives can be classified into several major semantic groups, including qualitative adjectives, relative adjectives, color adjectives, size and shape adjectives, age and time-related adjectives, emotional and evaluative adjectives, physical property adjectives, and adjectives denoting character or mental qualities.





These semantic categories are largely universal in nature, which proves that both languages share common conceptual mechanisms in the description of reality. In both English and Uzbek, adjectives are widely used to express direct and indirect qualities and to provide detailed and expressive descriptions in speech and writing. At the same time, the research has revealed that despite these similarities, there are also notable differences in the semantic organization and functional realization of adjectives in the two languages. One of the major distinctions lies in the typological nature of the languages themselves. English, as an analytic language, often expresses semantic variation through contextual usage, polysemy, and lexical flexibility. Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, tends to demonstrate greater semantic transparency through derivational patterns and more clearly structured lexical formation. As a result, certain semantic distinctions in Uzbek adjectives are more directly connected with word-building elements, whereas in English many adjectival meanings are dependent on context, collocation, and stylistic usage. The study has also confirmed that the semantic classification of adjectives cannot always be regarded as a completely fixed or rigid system. Many adjectives in both languages are polysemantic, and their meanings may shift according to context, communicative intention, or figurative usage.

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