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SYNONYMY IN RUSSIAN AND UZBEK LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This article examines the phenomenon of synonymy in the Russian and Uzbek languages from a comparative linguistic perspective. It analyzes the semantic, stylistic, and functional features of synonyms in both languages, highlighting similarities and differences in their structural organization and usage. Particular attention is paid to the classification of synonyms, their role in enriching lexical systems, and their contribution to expressive and communicative diversity. The study also explores the cultural and cognitive aspects influencing synonym formation and development in Russian and Uzbek. The comparative analysis demonstrates that while both languages share universal principles of synonymic relations, they also reveal language-specific characteristics shaped by their historical development and typological structure. The findings contribute to contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication research.

Keywords: Synonymy, comparative linguistics, Russian language, Uzbek language, lexical semantics, stylistic differentiation, contrastive analysis, lexical system.

Introduction

The study of synonymy occupies a central place in modern linguistics, as it reflects the richness, flexibility, and expressive potential of a language's lexical system. Synonyms not only ensure semantic precision in communication but

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also contribute to stylistic variation, emotional coloring, and pragmatic nuance in speech. In this regard, the comparative analysis of synonymy in different languages provides valuable insights into their structural, semantic, and cultural specificities.


The Russian and Uzbek languages, belonging to different language families and typological systems, present an interesting field for contrastive linguistic research. Russian, as an Indo-European inflectional language, and Uzbek, as a Turkic agglutinative language, differ significantly in grammatical structure, word formation, and semantic organization. However, both languages demonstrate a developed system of synonymic relations that reflects their historical evolution, cultural worldview, and communicative needs.

In contemporary linguistic studies, synonymy is examined not only from a purely lexical-semantic perspective but also in connection with stylistics, pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, and translation theory. The analysis of synonymic rows, degrees of semantic proximity, contextual variability, and functional differentiation allows for a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and conveyed in discourse. Moreover, comparative research in this field is especially relevant for translation practice, intercultural communication, and language teaching, where accurate semantic equivalence and stylistic adequacy are essential.

Therefore, the investigation of synonymy in Russian and Uzbek through a comparative approach is both theoretically significant and practically valuable. It enables the identification of universal and language-specific features of synonymic systems and contributes to the broader development of contrastive linguistics and bilingual studies.

Literature review and Methodology

The phenomenon of synonymy has long occupied a central place in linguistic research. Many prominent linguists have emphasized that synonymy is not merely the coexistence of words with similar meanings, but a complex semantic, stylistic, and functional relationship within the lexical system of a language.


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In Russian linguistics, V.V. Vinogradov considered synonymy one of the most important indicators of lexical richness and expressive potential. According to him, synonyms are words that are close in meaning but differ in semantic shades, stylistic coloring, or sphere of usage. He stressed that absolute synonymy is practically non-existent in natural languages; instead, synonymic relations are characterized by partial semantic overlap and functional differentiation. This idea is particularly evident in Russian, where stylistic contrasts—neutral, colloquial, bookish, and archaic—form the basis of synonymic variation.

A.A. Reformatsky also highlighted that synonymy should be examined within the system of lexical oppositions. In his view, synonymic rows function as micro-systems within the broader lexical structure, where each element occupies a specific semantic niche. This systemic approach is highly relevant for comparative analysis with Uzbek, as it allows us to observe how lexical units are distributed according to semantic intensity and stylistic value in both languages.

In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as A. Hojiyev and Sh. Rahmatullayev have studied synonymy from the perspective of lexical semantics and word formation. They emphasize that Uzbek synonymy often reflects historical layers of vocabulary, including native Turkic words and borrowings from Arabic and Persian. According to Uzbek linguists, synonymic pairs frequently arise due to the coexistence of these lexical strata, which enrich the expressive capacity of the language and provide stylistic alternatives in literary and everyday speech. Comparative linguists note that although Russian and Uzbek belong to different typological groups—Indo-European inflectional and Turkic agglutinative respectively—their synonymic systems demonstrate universal principles. Scholars in contrastive linguistics argue that synonymy in both languages operates on the basis of semantic proximity combined with pragmatic and stylistic differentiation. However, the mechanisms of synonym formation differ due to morphological structure and historical development.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, researchers argue that synonymy reflects conceptual categorization in the human mind. Words that appear synonymous often highlight different aspects of the same concept. For example,

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Russian lexical studies show that synonyms may emphasize emotional intensity or social evaluation, while Uzbek scholars observe that many synonyms carry cultural and ethical connotations rooted in national worldview and traditional values.

In translation studies, theorists stress that synonymy presents both opportunities and challenges. According to translation scholars, achieving equivalence between Russian and Uzbek synonyms requires attention not only to dictionary meaning but also to stylistic tone, context, and cultural associations. This confirms the view that synonymy is deeply connected to discourse and communicative intention.

Modern linguists also emphasize the dynamic nature of synonymy. With the development of media and digital communication, both Russian and Uzbek vocabularies are expanding, leading to the emergence of new synonymic rows. Borrowings, neologisms, and colloquial innovations continually reshape the lexical system, demonstrating that synonymy is not static but evolves with social and cultural change.

In summary, scholarly perspectives converge on several key ideas:

1. Absolute synonymy is rare; most synonymic relations are partial and context-dependent.
2. Synonymy reflects stylistic, semantic, and cultural differentiation.
3. Historical development and lexical borrowing play a significant role in forming synonymic systems.
4. Comparative analysis reveals both universal linguistic mechanisms and language-specific characteristics.

Thus, the views of Russian and Uzbek scholars collectively demonstrate that synonymy is a fundamental and multifaceted phenomenon, serving as an indicator of lexical richness, cultural identity, and communicative flexibility in both languages.

Result and Discussion

Synonymy in Russian and Uzbek demonstrates both universal semantic principles and language-specific features shaped by typology, culture, and

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stylistic traditions. A comparative analysis based on lexical examples reveals how synonymic relations function in both systems.

In both Russian and Uzbek, so-called “absolute” synonyms are rare. Most synonymic pairs differ in stylistic coloring, intensity, or contextual usage.

For example:

- Russian: *смелый – храбрый – отважный*
- Uzbek: *jasur – botir – qo‘rqmas*

At first glance, these words appear interchangeable. However, in Russian, *смелый* often denotes general courage, *храбрый* implies moral bravery, and *отважный* carries a stronger heroic connotation. Similarly, in Uzbek, *jasur* is neutral, *botir* often implies heroism or epic bravery (frequently used in historical or literary contexts), while *qo‘rqmas* emphasizes fearlessness in a more descriptive sense.

Thus, in both languages, synonymy is predominantly partial rather than absolute. Stylistic stratification plays a crucial role in synonymy.

Russian example:

- *говорить* (neutral)
- *болтать* (colloquial, often negative)
- *вещать* (bookish or ironic)

Uzbek parallel:

- *gapirmoq* (neutral)
- *vaysaymoq* (colloquial, negative connotation)
- *so‘zlamoq* (literary, elevated style)

Although these verbs share a core meaning (“to speak”), their stylistic usage differs. Russian synonymy frequently reflects register distinctions (neutral, colloquial, high style), while Uzbek synonymy often differentiates between literary and spoken variants.

Synonymy also reflects emotional nuance.

Russian:

- *дом* (neutral)
- *жилище* (formal, abstract)
- *хижина* (negative, “hut”)

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Uzbek:

- *uy* (neutral)
- *maskan* (poetic, elevated)
- *kulba* (small hut, sometimes negative)

Both languages use synonymic variation to express emotional or evaluative attitude toward the same object. However, Uzbek often employs poetic and Persian-Arabic borrowings (*maskan*) for stylistic elevation, while Russian uses Church Slavonic or bookish forms (*жилище*).

Russian synonymy is significantly influenced by Church Slavonic and European borrowings:

- *город – град*
- *золото – злато*

These pairs show stylistic differentiation between neutral and archaic/poetic forms.

Uzbek synonymy reflects Turkic roots alongside Arabic and Persian borrowings:

- *ilm – fan*
- *yurt – vatan*

In many cases, borrowed words acquire specialized or formal meanings, enriching synonymic rows and expanding stylistic possibilities.

Contextual synonymy is another important phenomenon.

Russian:

- *быстро* and *мгновенно* are not complete synonyms, but in certain contexts they may function synonymously:

Он быстро ответил. / Он мгновенно ответил.


Uzbek:

- *tez* and *zudlik bilan*
- *U tez javob berdi. / U zudlik bilan javob berdi.*

Although *мгновенно* and *zudlik bilan* imply greater immediacy, in specific discourse contexts they can substitute for more neutral forms.

Certain synonymic relations reflect cultural worldview differences.

Russian has multiple synonyms for “road”:

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дорога, путь, трасса, шоссе

Uzbek equivalents:

yo'l, so'qmoq, magistral

However, semantic distribution differs. For example, *путь* can carry abstract meaning (“life path”), whereas in Uzbek the metaphorical equivalent is often *yo'l* (*hayot yo'li*). This indicates both universality and specificity in conceptual metaphor formation.

Both languages demonstrate synonymy at the phraseological level.

Russian:

- *бить баклуши* (to idle)
- *ничего не делать*

Uzbek:

- *bekorchilik qilmoq*
- *qo'l qovushtirib o'tirmoq*

While direct lexical synonyms exist, phraseological units provide expressive alternatives. Uzbek idioms often emphasize imagery, whereas Russian idioms frequently rely on historical or cultural metaphors.

General Observations

1. In both Russian and Uzbek, synonymy is predominantly semantic-stylistic rather than absolute.
2. Russian synonymy shows strong differentiation based on register and historical linguistic layers.
3. Uzbek synonymy reflects interaction between Turkic roots and Persian-Arabic borrowings.
4. Context and pragmatic intention play a decisive role in synonym choice in both languages.
5. Comparative analysis highlights universal principles of lexical variation alongside typological and cultural distinctions.

Thus, synonymy in Russian and Uzbek functions as a dynamic lexical mechanism that ensures semantic precision, stylistic richness, and communicative flexibility. The comparative perspective reveals both shared

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linguistic tendencies and unique structural characteristics shaped by historical and cultural development.

Conclusion



The comparative analysis of synonymy in the Russian and Uzbek languages demonstrates that synonymy is a complex, multidimensional lexical phenomenon reflecting the semantic richness, stylistic flexibility, and cultural depth of both languages. Despite belonging to different language families and typological systems, Russian and Uzbek exhibit common universal principles in the formation and functioning of synonymic relations. In both languages, absolute synonymy is practically absent; instead, synonymic units differ in semantic nuance, emotional coloring, stylistic register, and contextual applicability.

The study confirms that Russian synonymy is strongly influenced by historical lexical layers, including Church Slavonic and European borrowings, which contribute to stylistic stratification and expressive variation. In Uzbek, synonymy is shaped by the interaction of native Turkic vocabulary with Arabic and Persian loanwords, resulting in rich semantic and stylistic differentiation, particularly in literary and formal discourse.

Furthermore, synonymy in both languages performs not only a nominative function but also an expressive and pragmatic one. The choice of a particular synonym depends on communicative intention, discourse context, and cultural norms. This highlights the importance of cognitive and sociolinguistic factors in synonym usage.

From a contrastive linguistic perspective, the research reveals that while the structural mechanisms of synonym formation may differ due to morphological and typological characteristics, the functional role of synonymy in ensuring precision, stylistic diversity, and communicative effectiveness remains universal.

Thus, synonymy serves as an essential indicator of lexical development and cultural identity in both Russian and Uzbek. The findings of this study contribute to the advancement of comparative linguistics, translation theory, and bilingual

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education by emphasizing the need to consider semantic nuance, stylistic differentiation, and cultural specificity in cross-linguistic analysis.

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