

SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF SYNONYMS IN UZBEK AND FRENCH**K.K. Latifova**

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola o‘zbek va fransuz tillarida sinonimlarning semantik hamda pragmatik xususiyatlarini qiyosiy yondashuvda tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi sinonimik qatorlarda ma’no yadrosi, uslubiy bo‘yoq, registr va nutqiy vaziyatga bog‘liq tanlov mexanizmlarini aniqlash hamda ikki til uchun umumiy va farqli pragmatik naqshlarni tavsiflashdan iborat. Metodologiya korpusga tayangan leksik-semantik tahlil, komponent tahlili, kollokatsion profil va nutqiy aktlar doirasida kontekstual pragmatik izoh usullarini birlashtiradi. Maqolada sinonimlarning ekvivalentligi mutlaq emasligi, balki presuppozitsiya, baholovchanlik, ijtimoiy masofa va kommunikativ maqsad kabi omillar orqali boshqarilishi ilmiy dalillar bilan asoslanadi. Ilmiy yangilik o‘zbek va fransuz materialida sinonim tanlovining pragmatik parametrlarini yagona modelga keltirish va tarjimada xatolik tug‘diruvchi “soxta sinonimiya” zonalarini tipologik tasniflash bilan belgilanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: sinonimiya; semantika; pragmatika; uslubiy bo‘yoq; registr; korpus lingvistikasi; qiyosiy tahlil

Аннотация. В статье проводится сопоставительный анализ семантических и прагматических свойств синонимов в узбекском и французском языках. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении механизмов выбора внутри синонимических рядов с учетом ядра значения, стилистической окраски, регистра и речевой ситуации, а также в описании общих и специфических прагматических паттернов двух языков. Методология объединяет корпусно-ориентированный лексико-семантический анализ, компонентный анализ, исследование коллокационных профилей и контекстуальную прагматическую интерпретацию в рамках теории речевых актов. Показано, что эквивалентность синонимов не является абсолютной и регулируется пресуппозицией, оценочностью, социальной дистанцией и коммуникативной целью. Научная новизна состоит в построении единой модели прагматических параметров выбора синонимов на материале узбекского и французского языков и в типологизации зон «ложной синонимии», провоцирующих переводческие ошибки.

Ключевые слова: синонимия; семантика; прагматика; стилистическая окраска; регистр; корпусная лингвистика; сопоставительный анализ

Annotation. This article offers a contrastive study of the semantic and pragmatic properties of synonyms in Uzbek and French. The aim is to identify how speakers select items within synonymic sets depending on meaning yadro, stylistic coloring, register, and situational constraints, and to describe shared versus language-specific pragmatic patterns. The methodology combines corpus-informed lexical-semantic analysis, componential analysis, collocational profiling, and contextual pragmatic interpretation within a speech-act perspective. The findings demonstrate that synonymy is rarely absolute; it is shaped by presupposition, evaluative stance, social distance, and communicative intent, which systematically affect distribution in discourse. The article’s novelty lies in proposing a unified parameter-based model for synonym choice applicable to both Uzbek and French and in classifying “false synonymy” zones that frequently trigger translation mismatches. The study also outlines practical

implications for lexicography, translation training, and pragmatic annotation of bilingual resources.

Keywords: synonymy; semantics; pragmatics; stylistic colouring; register; corpus linguistics; contrastive analysis

Introduction. The comparative elucidation of the semantic-pragmatic nature of synonyms involves identifying, on the one hand, the semantic structure of linguistic units that express the same or closely related denotative meaning and, on the other hand, the relationship between their selection in discourse and the conditions that determine their communicative effect. This mechanism operates in such a way that lexical units preserve a common core lexical meaning while differing in connotation, evaluative coloring, social distance, and register, and it is precisely these differences that guide pragmatic choice. For example, in Uzbek, the verbs *aytmoq* (“to say”) and *bayon etmoq* (“to state” or “to express”) both serve to convey an idea; however, the former is more natural in a neutral spoken register, whereas the latter is preferred in formal and academic discourse. A similar distribution can be observed in French between *dire* and *déclarer*. Based on corpus observations, as a general tendency, lexical items such as *bayon etmoq* occur considerably more frequently in formal texts than in spoken dialogues, and a comparable pattern is evident in French, where *déclarer* appears more often than *dire* in formal genres. This phenomenon serves as an empirical indicator of pragmatic differentiation. From a scholarly perspective, synonymy should be understood not merely as semantic similarity but as a system of choice that optimizes communicative functions. It is regulated by the social indexicality of linguistic units and by discourse norms. Therefore, it is insufficient to define synonyms solely through the simplified notion that they can substitute for one another. [4; 6].

The relevance of this topic is primarily determined by the fact that, although Uzbek and French belong to different typological language systems, synonymic sets in both languages serve as important instruments for ensuring communicative effectiveness, politeness, and stylistic appropriateness. The significance of this issue becomes particularly evident in translation practice and bilingual lexicography, where an equivalent selected solely on the basis of “similar meaning” often proves unsuitable for a specific context and may distort the intended communicative purpose. For example, the Uzbek word *tanqid* can be translated into French as *critique*, which is denotatively accurate; however, in certain contexts, *reproche* or *remarque* may be pragmatically more appropriate. Conversely, the French word *plainte* is not always best rendered as *shikoyat* in Uzbek, but may correspond more naturally to *arz* or *e’tiroz* in a softer register. Experience in lexicography has repeatedly shown that the treatment of synonyms as “absolute equivalents” constitutes a significant source of inaccuracies in bilingual learner dictionaries, while a substantial proportion of translation errors arise from the failure to consider register and evaluative connotations. From a scholarly perspective, this phenomenon confirms the pragmatic principle of context dependence: meaning is not merely the sum of lexical components but rather a dynamic construct shaped by the interaction of the speech situation, the audience, and the communicative purpose. [2; 5].

The aim of the article is to provide a systematic account of the stability of the semantic core and the differentiation that arises through pragmatic parameters in Uzbek and French synonyms. To achieve this objective, several tasks are proposed: identifying the component structure of synonymic sets, recording collocational restrictions, measuring distributions related to register and speech acts, and classifying zones of “false synonymy” in translation. For example, within the synonymic set of Uzbek verbs related to *ko‘rmoq* (“to see”), the expression *tomosha qilmoq* (“to watch”) differs from *ko‘rmoq* in terms of object requirements and discourse function. A similar distinction exists in French between *voir* and *regarder*, which differ in object orientation and duration of perception. From an empirical perspective, it may be expected that *regarder* demonstrates a significantly higher rate of collocation with audiovisual objects than *voir*, while

in Uzbek, tomosha qilmoq is more likely to occur with nouns such as film and spektakl (“theatre performance”). The scientific novelty of the study lies in its attempt to describe synonyms within a unified framework based on comparative pragmatic parameters, thereby refining the criteria applicable to educational lexicographic resources and translation training. The theoretical foundation of the research is aligned with approaches that emphasize the integration of lexical semantics and pragmatics.[1; 7].

Materials and Methods. The research material consists of synonymic sets selected from the Uzbek and French languages, their contexts of use in authentic texts, and the definitions and labels provided in lexicographic sources. The mechanism for selecting the material was designed in such a way that, first, twelve synonymic sets were identified on the basis of high-frequency verbs and nouns. Subsequently, at least eighty contextual examples were collected for each set, resulting in a corpus of more than 1,900 context units included in the analysis. For example, the Uzbek synonymic set *aytmoq* (*aytmoq*, *demoq*, *bayon etmoq*, *ta’kidlamoq*) and the French *dire* set (*dire*, *déclarer*, *préciser*, *affirmer*) were examined across both formal and spoken genres. As part of the quantitative description, the frequency of occurrence of each lexical unit across different registers was recorded in percentage terms, while the number of collocational pairings and their distributional dispersion were also taken into account. This approach made it possible to demonstrate the phenomenon of “distributed equivalence” among synonyms. From a scholarly perspective, the corpus-oriented approach connects the abstract notion of synonymy with actual language use and reveals the discrepancy between “dictionary equivalence” and “discourse appropriateness” [3].

The methodological framework of the study consists of componential analysis, collocational analysis, contextual-pragmatic interpretation, and comparative typological analysis. The mechanism of these methods can be described as follows: componential analysis identifies the semantic core and differentiating semes; collocational analysis determines restrictions imposed by the lexical environment; and pragmatic interpretation extracts parameters such as speech acts, presuppositions, and social distance from contextual usage. For example, *ta’kidlamoq* and *affirmer* often reinforce the modality of certainty and evidentiality, whereas *bayon etmoq* and *déclarer* are typically associated with formal procedures and institutional contexts. At the componential level, these distinctions can be represented through semes such as “institutionality” and “epistemic strength.” Quantitatively, it was observed that modal-intensifying lexical units occur more frequently in argumentative genres than their neutral counterparts. For instance, in academic and journalistic texts, *ta’kidlamoq* appears at a considerably higher rate than *aytmoq*. From a scholarly perspective, the integration of these methods is consistent with the principles of pragmatic semantics, according to which lexical meaning is not solely referential in nature but also incorporates semes that encode communicative intention and discourse-related functions [6;56].

To ensure the reliability of the research, specific procedures for data coding and verification were developed. The mechanism of this procedure consisted in assigning separate codes to each context according to register (spoken, neutral written, formal), evaluative orientation (positive, neutral, negative), speech act type (statement, request, objection, argumentation), and social distance (close, neutral, distant). The coded data were then subjected to a two-stage verification process. For example, although the Uzbek *iltimos qilmoq* and the French *prier* express a similar illocutionary purpose, the latter carries a stronger presupposition of formality. This distinction was therefore reflected through the register parameter in the coding process. As a quantitative control measure, a high level of coding consistency was expected during the verification stage, and the stability of the obtained results in practice indicated that the material had been analyzed systematically and consistently. From a scholarly perspective, the explicit coding of pragmatic parameters transforms synonymic differences from intuitive impressions into verifiable scientific evidence, thereby reducing subjectivity in comparative analysis and increasing the reliability of the findings [5;56].

Results. The results demonstrated that, while the semantic core is preserved within synonymic sets, a clear distribution emerges through differential semes and pragmatic constraints. The mechanism underlying this phenomenon is that each synonymic set generally contains one or two neutral dominant members, whereas the remaining units become specialized according to parameters such as formality, evaluative meaning, evidentiality, or emotional expressiveness. For example, in the Uzbek synonymic set *gapirmoq*, *so'zlamoq*, *bayon etmoq*, and *tilga olmoq*, the verb *gapirmoq* functions as the dominant member; *bayon etmoq* is used more frequently in formal discourse, while *tilga olmoq* tends to occur in pragmatic contexts involving the mention of a specific or limited topic. Similarly, in the French set *parler*, *dire*, *évoquer*, and *exposer*, *parler* serves as the dominant member, whereas *exposer* is characteristic of academic and formal discourse, and *évoquer* is commonly employed when introducing a topic briefly or indirectly. Quantitatively, although the proportion of register-specialized lexical units is considerably lower than that of neutral dominant forms, their relative frequency increases sharply within the genres for which they are specialized. This phenomenon can be described as a “register-dependent activation effect.” From a scholarly perspective, these findings confirm that synonymy is structured through the interaction between paradigmatic similarity and syntagmatic appropriateness. In other words, even when lexical units share closely related meanings, their contexts of use are not necessarily interchangeable.

The findings revealed that the collocational profile is one of the most sensitive indicators for identifying the pragmatic specialization of synonyms. The mechanism behind this phenomenon is that certain synonyms consistently combine with specific objects, topics, or discourse formulas, thereby forming a distinctive “collocational signature” that reinforces their connotative meaning. For example, in Uzbek, *masala ko'tarmoq* (“to raise an issue”) and *muammoni tilga olmoq* (“to mention a problem”) both refer to addressing a topic; however, the former is more strongly associated with initiative and institutional action, whereas the latter tends to convey caution and indirectness. A similar distinction can be observed in French between *soulever une question* and *évoquer un problème*. Quantitatively, the verb *ko'tarmoq* was found to display a higher frequency and greater diversity of combinations with abstract nouns, while *tilga olmoq* occurred more repeatedly within a relatively restricted set of collocational partners. Comparable tendencies were observed in the French data, where *soulever* showed a higher degree of association with lexical items such as *question*, *débat*, and *polémique*. From a scholarly perspective, collocational constraints indicate the activation of semantic components within discourse and thereby index pragmatic intention. Consequently, the selection of a synonym is often governed not only by what it means, but also by the patterns of combination through which it is conventionally used.

The results also revealed the existence of areas of “false synonymy,” which constitute one of the most frequent sources of errors in translation. The mechanism underlying these zones is that, although denotative similarity may exist between lexical items in two languages, their presuppositions, evaluative meanings, or registers do not fully correspond. As a consequence, a formally equivalent translation may lead to pragmatic mismatch. For example, translating the French word *polémique* as *bahs* in all contexts may weaken the degree of conflict conveyed by the original, since in certain situations it is closer in meaning to *janjal* (“dispute”) or *keskin munozara* (“heated debate”). Likewise, rendering the Uzbek word *tanbeh* consistently as *remarque* may soften its pragmatic force, whereas *reproche* or *réprimande* may provide a more accurate representation of its evaluative and disciplinary implications. Quantitatively, in at least half of the twelve synonymic sets examined, one or two lexical items were identified as “high-risk equivalents” specifically because of differences in presupposition and evaluative meaning. Such items were found to recur as sources of error in a noticeable proportion of learner translation tasks. From a scholarly perspective, these findings support the theory of pragmatic equivalence, according to which the primary unit of translation is not the word itself but rather its

communicative force. Consequently, synonymy and equivalence must be assessed at the level of pragmatic impact rather than solely through lexical meaning.

Discussion. The obtained results demonstrate that the traditional criterion of “semantic similarity,” widely emphasized in classical approaches to synonymy, should not be rejected but rather supplemented with pragmatic parameters. This conclusion is grounded in the observation that, while the identification of a shared semantic core allows lexical units to be grouped into a synonymic set, the actual choice among them in real communication is largely determined by factors such as register, evaluative meaning, and illocutionary purpose. For example, previous studies have noted that linguistic units differ in their communicative force from the perspective of pragmatic meaning and presupposition. Similarly, the present analysis revealed that among Uzbek and French synonyms, the semes of “evidentiality” and “institutionality” function as the most active differentiating factors. Quantitatively, lexical units specialized for formal discourse may occur less frequently in the corpus as a whole; however, their relative proportion increases sharply within the specific discourse segments for which they are conventionally associated. In the present study, this pattern emerged systematically and may be interpreted as a phenomenon of “normative density within genre.” From a scholarly perspective, the more pragmatically specialized synonyms become, the more their distribution shifts from free interchangeability toward norm-governed selection. This finding highlights the necessity of incorporating normative descriptions of synonym usage into both language teaching and translation practice. [4;88].

The findings also indicate that, although the pragmatic indexicality of synonyms in Uzbek and French follows similar general principles, it is encoded differently due to the specific resources available within each language system. The mechanism underlying this difference is that Uzbek often employs auxiliary-verb constructions and analytic expressions to convey subtle distinctions of register, whereas French tends to rely on formal vocabulary of Latin origin and derivational mechanisms that strongly index formality and abstraction. For example, in Uzbek, the analytic construction *izoh bermoq* (“to provide an explanation”) functions as a marker of formal style. In French, similar functions may be fulfilled by *expliciter* or *fournir une explication*; however, the former generally carries a more terminological and academic character, while the latter may convey a more procedural or descriptive nuance. Quantitatively, the data show a greater concentration of Latin-derived formal lexical variants in French academic texts, whereas in Uzbek, analytic constructions occur more frequently in official and administrative discourse. This pattern suggests that the two languages employ different mechanisms for encoding formality. From a scholarly perspective, these differences are consistent with broader typological distinctions. Agglutinative and analytic strategies package pragmatic meaning in different ways, resulting in distinct internal hierarchies within synonymic sets and shaping the distribution of lexical choices across discourse contexts [1; 2].

The practical significance of this study lies primarily in demonstrating the necessity of incorporating pragmatic markers as obligatory parameters in bilingual dictionary compilation and translation competence development. This practical mechanism operates in such a way that, instead of providing only a label indicating “synonymy,” lexicographic entries should also include metadata concerning register, evaluative connotation, typical collocations, and compatibility with particular speech acts. Such information enables users to make more accurate lexical choices and reduces the likelihood of communicative errors. For example, translating the Uzbek expression *e’tiroz bildirmoq* exclusively by the French verb *protester* may unnecessarily intensify the tone and convey a stronger degree of opposition than intended. Therefore, alternatives such as *objecter* or *exprimer une réserve* should also be provided, accompanied by pragmatic explanations indicating their respective levels of intensity and contextual appropriateness. Similarly, rendering *talab qilmoq* uniformly as *exiger* may introduce excessive forcefulness in certain contexts, whereas *demander* may offer a more suitable register match. Quantitative analysis of learner translations indicates that a considerable proportion of translation

errors are associated with the inappropriate selection of register and evaluative meaning. Consequently, the inclusion of pragmatic annotation is expected to reduce the frequency of such errors. From a scholarly perspective, pragmatic annotation transforms lexicography from a mere “list of meanings” into a “model of usage.” This approach aligns with contemporary trends in corpus linguistics, which emphasize the importance of authentic language use, contextual appropriateness, and discourse-based descriptions of lexical meaning [3; 7].

The limitations of this study should also be clearly acknowledged, since synonymy and pragmatics are inherently dynamic phenomena that depend heavily on contextual variation. The mechanism of these limitations lies in the fact that the twelve synonymic sets selected for analysis provide a representative overview but cannot fully encompass all lexical layers of the language, including dialectal synonymy, professional jargon, and poetic or literary innovations. For example, in literary texts, the choice of a synonym is often influenced not only by register but also by rhythm, imagery, and intertextual references. In French poetry, stylistic contrasts between regard and vue may involve aesthetic and symbolic dimensions, while in Uzbek literature the lexical items nazar and qarash may carry artistic and cultural connotations that extend beyond the scope of conventional register analysis. From a quantitative perspective, expanding the sample size across genres—particularly by incorporating a larger number of spoken interaction transcripts and social media texts—would further strengthen the reliability of the findings and provide a more nuanced picture of the distribution of pragmatic parameters. From a scholarly standpoint, a promising direction for future research would be to combine pragmatic analysis with psycholinguistic experimentation. Investigating factors such as lexical choice speed, processing effort, and acceptability judgments could offer deeper insights into the cognitive mechanisms underlying synonym selection and the interaction between semantic and pragmatic knowledge in language use [5].

Conclusion. The study systematically demonstrates that, although synonyms in Uzbek and French often share a similar semantic core, their pragmatic equivalence is frequently limited. Within synonymic sets, there are neutral dominant members alongside variants specialized according to factors such as register and evaluative meaning. In actual language use, lexical choice is primarily governed by social distance, communicative purpose, and discourse norms. The collocational profile emerged as one of the most reliable empirical indicators of the pragmatic specialization of synonyms, and the phenomenon of “distributed equivalence” was observed in both languages. Areas of “false synonymy,” which often lead to translation errors, were explained by mismatches in presupposition, modal force, and markers of formality. Overall, the findings suggest that comparative studies of synonymy should treat pragmatic parameters as essential descriptive criteria alongside semantic components. This approach has practical implications for bilingual lexicography, translation training, and the development of pragmatically annotated corpus resources, where a more accurate representation of lexical usage can contribute to improved language learning, translation quality, and linguistic analysis.

Adabiyotlar ro‘yxati.

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