



LEXICO-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF HOMONYMY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19395449>

Keywords: *homonymy, lexical semantics, English language, Uzbek language, comparative analysis, homophones, stylistic function*

Homonymy is a significant phenomenon in lexical semantics, reflecting the complex relationship between form and meaning in natural languages. Words that share identical phonetic or graphic forms while expressing unrelated meanings often create ambiguity and demand careful contextual interpretation. This study explores homonymy as a lexico-semantic phenomenon through a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek. Homonymy, defined as the coexistence of formally identical but semantically unrelated lexical items, represents an important source of lexical ambiguity in natural languages. The primary objective of this research is to identify and compare the main types of homonymy in English and Uzbek and to examine the linguistic factors that influence their formation and distribution.

The study adopts a descriptive and comparative methodology, drawing on data from authoritative English and Uzbek dictionaries as well as example from standard language usage. Homonymous units are classified according to their formal and semantic properties, with particular attention paid to homophones, homographs, and complete homonyms. The analysis demonstrates that English exhibits wider range of homonymous forms, largely due to historical sound changes and extensive lexical borrowing, while Uzbek displays a more limited but structurally motivated pattern of homonymy shaped by phonetic coincidence and agglutinative morphology. The findings of the study contribute to a clearer distinction between homonymy and related semantic phenomena such as polysemy and highlight the relevance of homonymy for lexicography, translation studies, and language teaching. Overall, the research emphasizes that homonymy should be regarded as a systematic and integral component of the lexical structure of both languages.

Language is a dynamic and constantly evolving system in which words function as the primary carriers of meaning. Within this system, lexical units are interconnected through various semantic relations that shape the structure of language's vocabulary. One of the most notable phenomena reflecting the interaction between form and meaning is homonymy. In linguistic research, lexical semantics examines how meaning are structured and related within the lexicon, and homonymy occupies an important position due to its role in creating lexical ambiguity and semantic differentiation. According to John Lyons, homonymy occurs when two or more lexemes share the same form while expressing entirely unrelated meanings.[4] Similarly, D.A. Cruse homonymy as a case of formal identity between lexical items that require separate semantic representation.[2] This phenomenon is observed across languages and arises as a natural result of linguistic development. Throughout the historical evolution of languages, phonetic change, semantic divergence, borrowing from other languages, and morphological processes contribute to the emergence of formally identical but semantically



unrelated lexical items. Consequently, homonymy should not be regarded as an anomaly, but rather as an inherent and systematic feature of lexical organization.

In English linguistics, homonymy has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly because of the language's complex historical evolution. Processes such as sound change, borrowing from other languages, and semantic divergence have led to the formation of numerous homonymous pairs and groups.[5] As a result, English displays a wide variety of homonyms, including homophones, homographs, and complete homonyms.

In contrast, homonymy in Uzbek has been less extensively studied, especially from a comparative perspective. Uzbek as an agglutinative language with a relatively stable phonological system, demonstrates different conditions for the emergence of homonymous forms.[1] Although homonymy exists in Uzbek, it is generally more restricted in scope and is frequently associated with phonetic coincidence or lexical differentiation rather than extensive historical sound convergence.

Despite the importance of homonymy in both languages, a clear comparative analysis of English and Uzbek remains limited. Previous studies have often focused on individual languages, leaving cross-linguistic differences insufficiently explored. This gap highlights the need for a systematic comparative investigation that examines how homonymy functions within distinct typological frameworks.

The data for the study were collected from authoritative monolingual dictionaries of English and Uzbek, as well as from standard reference materials in lexical semantics. English examples were drawn from widely used in English dictionaries, while Uzbek examples were selected from normative Uzbek lexicographic sources. Only established and commonly attested lexical items were included to ensure the reliability of the data.

The collected homonymous units were analyzed according to their formal and semantic characteristics. In English, homonyms were classified into homophones, homographs, and complete homonyms based on differences in pronunciation, spelling, and meaning. For instance, the words *right* (meaning "correct") and *write* (meaning "to record in written form") represent homophones, as they share pronunciation but differ in spelling and meaning. Similarly, the word *spring* may denote "a season of the year" or "a coiled metal device," illustrating complete homonymy when the meanings are historically unrelated. In Uzbek, the analysis focused primarily on complete homonyms, taking into account phonetic identity and semantic unrelatedness within the same grammatical category. Another example is *kul*, which may denote "ash" or function as an imperative form of the verb "to laugh." These examples demonstrate that Uzbek homonymy typically involves complete phonetic and graphic identity, while semantic unrelatedness is maintained.

A comparative method was applied to identify similarities and differences in the distribution and types of homonymy in the two languages. Special attention was paid to linguistic factors such as phonologic structure, morphological typology, and historical development that influence the emergence of homonymous forms. The results of the analysis were interpreted within the framework of lexical semantics, ensuring consistency with established theoretical approaches.

The analysis of homonymous lexical units in English and Uzbek reveals both shared characteristics and language-specific patterns in the realization of homonymy. However, the types and distribution of homonymous forms differ considerably.



In English, three main types of homonymy are attested: homophones, homographs, and complete homonyms. Homophones are especially common due to historical sound change. Typical examples include *pair* (a set of two) and *pear* (a type of fruit), as well as *sea* (a large body of salt water) and *see* (to perceive visually). These items share pronunciation but differ in spelling and meaning.

Homographs share spelling but differ in pronunciation. A well-established example is *lead*, pronounced /li:d/ meaning "to guide," and *lead*, pronounced /led/ referring to a metal. In addition, complete homonyms occur in cases where lexical items coincide both phonetically and graphically while expressing semantically unrelated meanings, such as *bank* meaning "a financial institution" and *bank* meaning "the side of a river."

The classification of English homonyms into homophones, homographs, and complete homonyms follows a widely accepted lexicological framework described in modern English lexicology.[3] This structural classification enables a clearer differentiation between phonetic, graphic and semantic aspects of formal identity and provides a consistent methodological basis for comparative analysis.

In Uzbek, homonymy is mainly linked to phonetic coincidence.[1] Common examples include *ot*, which can denote "a horse" or function as a grammatical term meaning "noun," and *yuz*, which may refer to "face" or the numeral "one hundred." These homonyms are formally identical but represent semantically unrelated concepts. Due to the relatively transparent orthographic system of Uzbek, graphic homonymy is less prominent than in English, while complete homonyms within the same grammatical category are more typical.

The comparative analysis indicates that English exhibits a wider range of homonymous types, particularly homophones and cross-categorical homonyms, whereas Uzbek homonymy is more limited in scope and more closely linked to phonetic and morphological factors. In both languages, homonymy contributes to lexical ambiguity and requires contextual differentiation to ensure accurate interpretation.

The results of study confirm that homonymy functions as a lexico-semantic phenomenon in both English and Uzbek, while its concrete realization is shaped by language-specific historical and structural factors. The presence of homonymous forms in both languages supports the view that homonymy represents a systematic feature of lexical organization rather than a marginal irregularity.

The prominence of homophones in English can be attributed to extensive historical sound changes and the long-term influence of lexical borrowing. These processes have resulted in the phonetic convergence of originally distinct lexical items, thereby increasing the density of homonymous forms. This observation is consistent with the position advanced by John Lyons, who argues that homonymy frequently arises from diachronic linguistic change rather than from synchronic semantic extension.[4] The abundance of homophones and cross-categorical homonyms in English thus reflects the complex historical layering of its vocabulary.

In contrast, the more limited distribution of homonymy in Uzbek reflects the language's relatively stable phonological system and its agglutinative morphological structure. These features tend to preserve clearer form – meaning relationships and reduce the likelihood of extensive phonetic overlap. Consequently, Uzbek homonymy is more frequently associated with phonetic coincidence and lexical differentiation than with large-scale historical



convergence. Complete homonyms in Uzbek, although fewer in number, generally demonstrate stable usage within clearly defined grammatical and semantic contexts.

The findings also reinforce the theoretical distinction between homonymy and polysemy that occupies a central position in lexical semantics. As noted by D. A. Cruse, homonymy involves a purely formal relationship between lexical items and requires separate semantic representation.[2] The English and Uzbek examples analyzed in this study illustrates that homonymous meanings lack semantic relatedness and therefore must be treated as independent lexical units, particularly in lexicographic description. From a comparative perspective, the results highlight the influence of typological differences on the structure of lexical systems. English demonstrates a higher degree of lexical ambiguity due to the density and diversity of homonymous forms, whereas Uzbek exhibits a more constrained but structurally motivated pattern of homonymy. These distinctions have important implications for translation and language teaching, where the accurate interpretation of homonymous items depends heavily on contextual and systemic factors. The present study demonstrates that homonymy constitutes a systematic and structurally significant component of the lexical organization in both English and Uzbek. While its manifestation varies according to typological and historical conditions, the phenomenon itself reflects fundamental principles of lexical differentiation and semantic independence.

The findings confirm the necessity of maintaining a clear theoretical distinction between homonymy and polysemy, particularly in lexicographic description and semantic analysis. Homonymous units require independent representation within the lexical system, as their meanings do not derive from semantic extension but from formal coincidence.

From a broader linguistic perspective, the comparative analysis highlights the importance of integrating typological considerations into lexical-semantic research. The study thus contributes to a deeper understanding of how structural and diachronic factors shape lexical systems and influence the distribution of semantic relations across languages.

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