

The System of Synonyms in the Uzbek Language and Their Stylistic Possibilities

Qarshiyeva Muxarram Shuxratovna

Termez State University, Philology and Language Teaching: First-year student of the Uzbek language program

Hamidov Mansur Abdumannobovich

Scientific advisor: Termez State University, Doctor of Philosophy in Philology

Abstract. *This article examines the system of synonyms in the Uzbek language with a specific focus on their stylistic functions across different communicative contexts. Synonyms in Uzbek not only serve as lexical alternatives but also reflect various stylistic registers—formal, informal, poetic, archaic, and dialectal—thus enhancing the expressive richness of the language. The research adopts a mixed-method approach combining traditional lexicological analysis, stylistic categorization, and corpus-based study using the Uzbek National Corpus. Findings reveal that synonym usage is highly dependent on discourse type, genre, and sociolinguistic variables such as speaker age, region, and formality. The paper classifies synonymous relations into stylistic equivalence, stylistic gradation, and stylistic divergence, providing concrete examples from literary, journalistic, conversational, and academic texts. The study argues for a stylistically aware approach to synonym teaching and recommends the development of a corpus-informed Uzbek synonym dictionary. This work contributes to the fields of Uzbek lexicology, stylistics, and applied linguistics by bridging semantic theory with functional usage in context.*

Key words: *Uzbek language, synonymy, stylistic variation, lexical semantics, functional styles, corpus linguistics, language register, pragmatic meaning, poetic diction, Turkic lexicography.*

INTRODUCTION

Synonymy is a core component of lexical semantics and plays a pivotal role in the richness, precision, and flexibility of any language. In the context of the Uzbek language, synonyms not only reflect semantic parallels but also highlight nuanced differences that serve various stylistic, emotional, and pragmatic functions. As a member of the Turkic language family, Uzbek has evolved a vibrant synonymous system influenced by both indigenous developments and external linguistic contacts, including Arabic, Persian, and Russian. The diversity of synonyms in Uzbek contributes significantly to the language's expressive capabilities and stylistic richness [1].

Despite the fundamental role of synonymy in communication and literary creativity, systematic studies of synonyms in Uzbek, particularly from the angle of their stylistic deployment, remain relatively limited. Much of the existing research focuses on semantic equivalence and lexicographic classification rather than how synonyms function across genres and registers. The need to distinguish between stylistically neutral, elevated, colloquial, dialectal, or archaic synonyms is particularly relevant for linguists, writers, and translators working in or with Uzbek [2].

This paper aims to investigate the structure of the synonym system in the Uzbek language and analyze the stylistic dimensions that guide synonym choice in both written and spoken discourse. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the key semantic and stylistic features of synonym groups in Uzbek [3]?
2. How are stylistic preferences for synonyms manifested in different functional styles (e.g., journalistic, poetic, conversational)?
3. To what extent do extralinguistic factors—such as context, intention, or social register—affect synonym selection [4]?

The study builds upon classical linguistic theory—particularly the work of Vinogradov, Ullmann, and Galperin—while contextualizing synonymy within the specific grammatical, historical, and cultural framework of the Uzbek language. Additionally, it incorporates recent stylistic and corpus-based research methods to ensure relevance and empirical rigor. Ultimately, the paper contributes to Uzbek lexicology, pragmatics, and applied stylistics by offering a typological overview of synonym groups and their usage patterns [5].

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

To investigate the Uzbek synonym system and its stylistic deployment, the study employed a mixed-method approach combining descriptive linguistic analysis, stylistic categorization, and corpus-based observation. The methodology consisted of three major components [6]:

1. Linguistic classification:

Using established Uzbek and Turkic lexicological sources—such as "O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati" and the "O'zbek tili sinonimlar lug'ati"—core synonym groups were identified and grouped according to semantic field and stylistic variation. Around 50 synonym sets were selected across different parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives) that are commonly used in everyday and literary Uzbek [7].

2. Stylistic analysis:

Each synonym within the selected groups was examined for its stylistic marking—neutral, formal, poetic, colloquial, archaic, dialectal, etc. This was determined by consulting style manuals, dictionaries, and Uzbek literary texts. Examples were drawn from classic authors (e.g., Abdulla Qodiriy, Abdulla Oripov) and contemporary media to illustrate stylistic distinctions in natural usage [8].

3. Corpus study:

A representative sample of written Uzbek texts was extracted from the Uzbek National Corpus (UNDC) and selected online databases. This sample included journalistic articles, prose fiction, public speeches, and online comments. Frequency and context of synonym usage were analyzed using concordance tools and frequency filters. This helped validate stylistic tendencies and distributional patterns in actual usage [8].

All data were organized into a spreadsheet, coding each synonym for part of speech, semantic nucleus, stylistic register, contextual variability, and frequency. Synonyms with multiple stylistic functions (polyfunctionality) were tagged and analyzed in separate clusters. Particular attention was given to near-synonyms (leksemalar yaqin ma'noli), where interchangeability is partial and governed by stylistic nuance [9].

The findings were then categorized into lexical-stylistic types: full stylistic equivalence, stylistic gradation, and stylistic divergence. Patterns of synonym preference across different registers (e.g., formal vs. informal speech) were mapped and compared using basic statistical analysis and heat maps [10].

RESULTS

The analysis revealed that the synonym system in Uzbek is both semantically rich and stylistically layered. Synonyms often differ not just in degree or tone, but in the specific stylistic domains they belong to. Three major types of stylistic relationship among synonyms were identified:

1. **Stylistic equivalence** – where two or more synonyms can be freely interchanged in most contexts without changing the stylistic tone. Example: *shod* and *xursand* (both meaning "happy") are mostly stylistically neutral and used across written and spoken registers [11].
2. **Stylistic gradation** – where synonyms convey similar meanings but with different levels of formality or emotional intensity. For instance, *taom* (neutral), *ovqat* (colloquial), and *nozik taom* (elevated) all mean "food" but are suited to different communicative settings [12].
3. **Stylistic divergence** – where synonyms are used in entirely different registers and cannot be substituted without altering the tone or meaning. For example, *vafot etdi* (formal, literary) vs. *o'ldi* (neutral/informal) vs. *jon berdi* (archaic/poetic), all meaning "died [13]."

The study also found that certain semantic fields are more stylistically rich than others. Emotions, personal attributes, and evaluative terms (e.g., beautiful, good, angry) tend to have the most stylistic variation. In contrast, technical or objective terms (e.g., stone, tree, number) show limited synonymy and stylistic range [14].

Corpus analysis demonstrated consistent stylistic patterns:

- Colloquial synonyms are dominant in online forums and dialogues.
- Poetic synonyms appear mostly in song lyrics, literature, and ceremonial speeches.
- Formal synonyms are more frequent in government documents, academic texts, and news media.

Additionally, the data showed that synonym choice is influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as speaker age, region, and educational level. Younger speakers tend to use more Russian loan-based synonyms (*avariya* instead of *halokat*), whereas older speakers prefer native equivalents [15].

The frequency data also confirmed a general stylistic drift toward neutralization in public discourse, especially in mass communication, where expressive synonyms are replaced by more neutral alternatives for clarity and inclusiveness.

CONCLUSION

The findings confirm that the synonym system in the Uzbek language is a dynamic tool not only for semantic precision but also for stylistic manipulation. The diversity of synonym types—ranging from stylistically neutral to highly marked expressions—provides speakers with the flexibility to adjust their language according to communicative intent, social context, and genre.

One important implication of the results is the pedagogical value of teaching synonyms with a stylistic framework. In Uzbek language education, especially for non-native speakers, synonym instruction often focuses on meaning rather than use. However, understanding the stylistic appropriateness of synonyms is crucial for fluency and pragmatic competence. For example, a student using *jon berdi* in a technical report may sound odd or overly poetic, just as using *o'ldi* in a condolence letter would be inappropriate.

Another noteworthy aspect is the impact of sociocultural and technological changes on synonym usage. With the rise of digital communication, Uzbek speakers increasingly prefer more concise and emotionally neutral language. This trend may contribute to the erosion of stylistically rich synonyms unless actively preserved in literature and education.

Furthermore, the study highlights the need to expand and modernize existing Uzbek synonym dictionaries. Many current resources lack context-sensitive examples and ignore stylistic classifications. A corpus-informed synonym database with stylistic tagging could be a valuable tool for writers, translators, and educators alike.

Future research should focus on the following directions:

- Contrastive synonym studies across Turkic languages to trace historical shifts;
- Cognitive approaches to synonym perception and usage in Uzbek;
- The role of media in shaping synonym preferences among youth.

In conclusion, the synonymous richness of the Uzbek language is not merely a lexical feature but a stylistic asset that reflects its historical depth and communicative versatility. Promoting awareness of these stylistic nuances contributes not only to linguistic scholarship but also to the refinement of expressive and culturally competent Uzbek usage.

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