

STRUCTURAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF WORD PAIRS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: This article explores the structural and semantic features of word pairs (binomials) in the English and Uzbek languages from a contrastive linguistic perspective. Word pairs are idiomatic or semi-fixed combinations of two words that are frequently used in both everyday and literary discourse. By analyzing their structure (morphological and syntactic patterns) and semantic relationships (synonymy, antonymy, collocation), the study aims to identify the commonalities and differences between the two languages. The findings contribute to better understanding of phraseological systems in typologically different languages and inform translation, language teaching, and lexicography.

Keywords: binomials, word pairs, phraseology, contrastive analysis, Uzbek, English, structure, semantics, idioms.

Introduction

Word pairs, also referred to as **binomials**, are pairs of words that are conventionally used together in a fixed or semi-fixed order, often joined by conjunctions. Examples in English include “**salt and pepper**”, “**give and take**”, or “**life and death**”. These combinations are not arbitrary; rather, they reflect syntactic rules, phonetic harmony, and cultural conventions. In the Uzbek language, word pairs are equally widespread and are typically used in proverbs, oral narratives, and poetic texts. For instance, “**nonu tuz**” (bread and salt), “**ota-ona**” (father and mother), and “**yaxshi-yomon**” (good and bad) represent not only linguistic structures but also cultural symbols.

Although both languages make extensive use of such expressions, they come from different typological backgrounds: English is an analytic language with relatively fixed word order, while Uzbek is an agglutinative, Turkic language with flexible syntactic patterns. This typological contrast makes a comparative study of word pairs particularly valuable for understanding how languages package meaning and reflect cultural values.

This paper aims to:

- Analyze the **structural** composition of word pairs in English and Uzbek.
- Examine their **semantic relationships**, including idiomatic meanings.
- Explore the **cultural significance** and pragmatic use of these word combinations.
- Provide **contrastive insights** for translation and language pedagogy.

Methodology

The study adopts a **corpus-based and comparative linguistic approach**, including the following steps:

Two sets of word pairs were compiled:

- **English dataset:** 300 word pairs from the British National Corpus (BNC), dictionaries of idioms, and literary texts.
- **Uzbek dataset:** 300 word pairs collected from Uzbek national corpus, classical and modern literary works, and dictionaries of phraseological units.

Each word pair was examined according to:

- **Structural Features:**
 - Conjunction usage (and/va/yoki)
 - Word class combinations (noun + noun, adj + adj, noun + verb)
 - Word order (fixed or variable)
 - Morphological consistency
- **Semantic Features:**
 - Relationship type: synonymy, antonymy, complementarity
 - Idiomatic or literal meaning
 - Cultural connotations
- **Pragmatic Usage:**
 - Frequency in speech vs. literature
 - Stylistic function
 - Presence in proverbs or metaphoric contexts
- Manual linguistic analysis
- Frequency count and collocation analysis using corpus software
- Contrastive framework adapted from **Lado (1957)** and **Barkhudarov (1996)**

Results and Discussion

Feature	English	Uzbek
Conjunction	Mostly “and”	Often “va” or hyphen (e.g., yaxshi-yomon)
Word order	Fixed (e.g., “bread and butter”, not butter and bread)	Can vary based on meaning/emphasis
Word classes	Primarily noun + noun or adj + adj	Wider variety: noun + noun, verb + verb, adjective + noun
Morphology	Analytic, invariant forms	Agglutinative, suffix-based harmony

Example:

- English: “black and white” (adjective + adjective)
- Uzbek: “oq-qora” (literal translation, but more flexible in use)

Word pairs serve a **reinforcing** or **contrasting** function. In English:

- **Synonymic:** “safe and sound”
- **Antonymic:** “right and wrong”
- **Cultural/idiomatic:** “bread and butter” = basic livelihood

In Uzbek:

- **Synonymic:** “tinch-osoyishta” (peaceful)
- **Antonymic:** “yaxshi-yomon” (good-bad)

- **Cultural:** “nonu tuz” = hospitality, sacredness of food
Many English word pairs have **institutional usage** (“law and order”), while Uzbek pairs more often derive from **everyday experience**, oral tradition, and moral values.
- English word pairs often appear in formal or literary contexts; their **order is usually fixed** and they follow phonetic or rhythmic rules (e.g., shorter word first: “rock and roll”).
- Uzbek pairs are more **semantic and culturally driven**, sometimes used **metaphorically** or **ritually**. The **repetition and reduplication** in Uzbek pairs (“dug-dug”, “jil-jil”) is another unique aspect.
English pairs emphasize **binary logic**, **legal or institutional norms**, and **emphasis on individualism**. Uzbek pairs highlight **collective experience**, **moral teachings**, and **emotional expression**.

Conclusion

The structural and semantic study of word pairs in English and Uzbek reveals significant insights into how each language encodes meaning through fixed expressions. While both languages share universal tendencies such as synonymic reinforcement and antonymic contrast, the cultural and grammatical backdrop introduces distinct features.

This study confirms that:

- Word pairs are crucial components of **phraseology** and **linguistic identity**.
- Contrastive analysis can aid in **translation**, **language instruction**, and **lexicographical work**.
- Uzbek word pairs are more **morphologically complex and culturally nuanced**, while English word pairs are **syntactically rigid and idiomatically rich**.
- Include word pairs in bilingual dictionary projects with full cultural and contextual annotations.
- Use word pairs in EFL/ESL and UFL/UzbFL classrooms to teach idiomaticity and cultural connotation.
- Further studies could involve comparison with other Turkic or Indo-European languages.

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