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SEMANTIC CHANGES IN MODERN UZBEK: MAIN TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Isadora Arbeláez
Philological researcher
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Abstract: Semantic change is an important process in the development of modern languages. In contemporary Uzbek, changes in word meanings are influenced by technological progress, globalization, social transformation, and cultural interaction. This article examines the main tendencies of semantic development, including semantic extension, narrowing, metaphorical transfer, and the emergence of new meanings. Particular attention is given to the influence of digital communication and borrowed vocabulary on the semantic structure of Uzbek words. The study demonstrates that semantic change contributes to the flexibility of language and its adaptation to modern communicative needs.

Keywords: semantic change, Uzbek language, lexical meaning, semantic extension, metaphor, globalization, neologisms, language development.

1. Introduction

Language constantly develops in response to changes in society, culture, science, and technology. One of the most significant aspects of linguistic development is semantic change, which involves the transformation of word meanings over time. Existing lexical units may acquire new meanings, lose certain semantic features, or become associated with new social and cultural phenomena.

Modern Uzbek is experiencing noticeable lexical and semantic developments as a result of digital technologies, international communication, and changes in everyday life. Words that traditionally referred to physical objects or activities are increasingly used to describe digital environments, professional relationships, and abstract concepts.

The purpose of this article is to examine the principal tendencies of semantic change in modern Uzbek and identify the linguistic and social factors contributing to this process.

2. Literature Review

Semantic change has been investigated within historical linguistics, lexical semantics, and cognitive linguistics. Ullmann (1962) examined the nature of meaning and the mechanisms through which lexical meanings develop. Traugott and Dasher (2002) investigated semantic change in relation to pragmatic interpretation and historical language development.

Geeraerts (2010) discussed major approaches to lexical semantics, including structural and cognitive perspectives. Blank (1999) examined the motivations and mechanisms of lexical semantic change, emphasizing the relationship between linguistic innovation and communicative needs.

These studies provide a theoretical foundation for analyzing changes in the semantic organization of contemporary Uzbek vocabulary.

3. Research Methodology

The study employs descriptive, semantic, comparative, and contextual analysis. The descriptive method identifies major types of semantic transformation, while semantic analysis examines relationships between established and newly developed meanings.

Contextual analysis is used to interpret selected Uzbek expressions in contemporary communication. The research is theoretical and relies on illustrative linguistic examples rather than a statistically representative corpus.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Semantic extension

Semantic extension occurs when a word develops additional meanings while retaining its established semantic associations.

For example, the Uzbek word tarmoq traditionally refers to a branch or interconnected structure. In contemporary communication, it is also widely used in expressions such as ijtimoiy tarmoq and kompyuter tarmog‘i.

Similarly, the word sahifa may refer to a page in a printed publication or a digital page on a website or social media platform.

These examples illustrate how existing vocabulary adapts to technological developments through semantic extension.

4.2. Metaphorical transfer

Metaphorical transfer represents an important mechanism of semantic development. It involves the application of a word to a new concept based on perceived similarity or conceptual association.

The Uzbek expression bilim kaliti uses the word kalit metaphorically to describe something that provides access to knowledge or understanding.

Similarly, hayot yo‘li conceptualizes human life through the image of a physical journey.

Such expressions demonstrate how concrete experiences contribute to the linguistic representation of abstract concepts.

4.3. Semantic narrowing

Semantic narrowing occurs when a lexical item becomes associated with a more restricted range of meanings in particular contexts.

In contemporary Uzbek, specialized terminology frequently develops through the narrowing of general lexical meanings.

For example, the word ilova has a general meaning associated with an addition or attachment. In digital communication, it is frequently used in the specialized sense of a software application.

This technological meaning does not eliminate the word's other uses. Rather, it illustrates the development of a specialized meaning within a particular communicative domain.

4.4. Influence of globalization and digital communication

Globalization contributes to semantic development through international terminology, language contact, and technological innovation.

Modern Uzbek increasingly employs borrowed words such as platforma, profil, blog, and kontent. These lexical items acquire specific meanings in digital communication and may develop additional contextual uses.

For instance, platforma can refer to a technological environment supporting online services, education, or communication.

The integration of such vocabulary demonstrates the interaction between external linguistic influences and the semantic organization of Uzbek.

4.5. Social and cultural factors

Semantic changes are also influenced by transformations in social relationships, professional activities, and cultural practices.

Words associated with education, employment, entrepreneurship, and communication may develop new contextual meanings as social institutions change.

For example, masofaviy ta'lim has become an established expression in educational discourse, reflecting the growing importance of technology-mediated instruction.

Such developments demonstrate that semantic innovation is closely connected with changing communicative needs.

5. Conclusion

Semantic change represents a natural and continuous process in the development of modern Uzbek. The analysis demonstrates that semantic extension, metaphorical transfer, specialization, and lexical borrowing contribute to the transformation of word meanings.

Technological development and globalization have created new contexts in which existing Uzbek words acquire additional meanings. At the same time, cultural and social transformations influence the interpretation and use of lexical units.

The study highlights the importance of examining semantic change through both linguistic mechanisms and external social factors. Future research based on historical dictionaries and contemporary language corpora could provide more systematic evidence of semantic developments in Uzbek.

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