

UDC(UO‘K, УДК): 81-26

SEMANTIC AND FUNCTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF LEXICAL DOUBLETS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK³²

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
The article compares lexical doublets in English and Uzbek, focusing on how their meanings diverge and how their use is divided among styles and registers. In both languages, doublets arose mainly through contact with other languages: English with Scandinavian, French and Latin, and Uzbek with Persian, Arabic and, later, Russian and other European languages. The study distinguishes etymological doublets, which go back to the same source, from synonymic doublets, which are words of different origin with the same or very close meaning. It uses lexicological and lexicographic sources together with the author's own contextual examples. Descriptive, comparative-typological, componential and contextual methods are applied. The results show three types of semantic variation, namely full divergence, partial divergence and stylistic differentiation. They also reveal a similar three-level functional model in both languages: native words serve everyday neutral speech, words borrowed in the earlier period serve literary and expressive speech, and learned borrowings serve formal, religious, scientific and official discourse. The study also shows that absolute doublets are unstable and tend either to differentiate or to drop out of use. The findings may be applied to teaching lexicology, to bilingual lexicography and to translation between English and Uzbek.	Lexical doublets, etymological doublets, synonymy, semantic variation, functional distribution, borrowing, register, English, Uzbek. Received: April 10, 2026 Accepted: April 22, 2026 Available online: September 5, 2026

³²**For citation (Iqtibos keltirish uchun, для цитирования):**

Yusupov O. Semantic and Functional Distribution of Lexical Doublets in English and Uzbek.// Komparativistika (Comparative Studies). — 2026. — Vol.3, № 4(12) — B. 496-507.

INGLIZ VA O‘ZBEK TILLARIDA LEKSIK DUBLETLAR SEMANTIK VA FUNKSIONAL TAQSIMOTI

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ANNOTATSIYA	KALIT SO‘ZLAR
Maqolada ingliz va o‘zbek tillaridagi leksik dubletlar qiyoslanadi. Asosiy e’tibor ularning ma’nolari qanday farqlanishiga va qo‘llanishi uslub hamda registrlar bo‘yicha qanday taqsimlanishiga qaratiladi. Har ikki tilda dubletlar asosan til aloqalari natijasida paydo bo‘lgan: ingliz tilida skandinav tillari, fransuz va lotin tillari bilan, o‘zbek tilida esa fors va arab tillari, keyinroq rus va boshqa Yevropa tillari bilan aloqalar orqali. Maqolada bir manbaga borib taqaladigan etimologik dubletlar hamda kelib chiqishi har xil, ammo ma’nosi bir xil yoki juda yaqin bo‘lgan sinonimik dubletlar farqlanadi. Material sifatida leksikologik va leksikografik manbalar hamda muallifning kontekstual misollari olindi. Tavsifiy, qiyosiy-tipologik, komponent va kontekstual tahlil metodlari qo‘llanildi. Natijada semantik variatsiyaning uch turi aniqlandi: to‘liq ajralish, qisman ajralish va uslubiy farqlanish. Har ikki tilda o‘xshash uch bosqichli funksional model ham ko‘rsatildi: o‘z qatlam so‘zlari kundalik neytral nutqda, ilk o‘zlashmalar adabiy va ta’sirchan nutqda, kitobiy o‘zlashmalar esa rasmiy, diniy, ilmiy va idoraviy nutqda qo‘llanadi. Shuningdek, absolyut dubletlar barqaror emasligi aniqlandi: ular yo ma’no jihatdan farqlanadi, yo iste’moldan chiqadi. Natijalardan leksikologiya o‘qitishda, ikki tilli leksikografiyada va ingliz hamda o‘zbek tillari o‘rtasidagi tarjimada foydalanish mumkin.	leksik dubletlar, etimologik dubletlar, sinonimiya, semantik variatsiya, funksional taqsimot, o‘zlashma, registr, ingliz tili, o‘zbek tili.

СЕМАНТИЧЕСКОЕ И ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ РАСПРЕДЕЛЕНИЕ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИХ ДУБЛЕТОВ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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АННОТАЦИЯ	КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА
В статье сопоставляются лексические дублеты английского и узбекского языков. Основное внимание уделяется расхождению их значений и распределению их употребления по стилям и регистрам. В обоих языках дублеты возникли главным образом в результате языковых контактов: английского со скандинавскими языками, французским и латынью, а узбекского с персидским и арабским, позднее с русским и другими европейскими языками. В работе разграничиваются этимологические дублеты, восходящие к одному источнику, и синонимические дублеты, то есть слова разного происхождения с одинаковым или очень близким значением. Материалом послужили лексикологические и лексикографические источники, а также контекстные примеры автора. Применены описательный, сравнительно-типологический, компонентный и контекстный методы. Выделены три типа семантического варьирования: полное расхождение, частичное расхождение и стилистическая дифференциация. В обоих языках установлена сходная трёхуровневая модель функционального распределения: исконные слова обслуживают нейтральную повседневную речь, ранние заимствования используются в литературной и экспрессивной речи, а книжные заимствования относятся к официальному, религиозному, научному и деловому дискурсу. Показано также, что абсолютные дублеты неустойчивы: они либо дифференцируются, либо выходят из употребления. Результаты могут быть использованы в преподавании лексикологии, в двуязычной лексикографии и в практике перевода между английским и узбекским языками.	Лексические дублеты, этимологические дублеты, синонимия, семантическое варьирование, функциональное распределение, заимствование, регистр, английский язык, узбекский язык.

INTRODUCTION

Every language with a long history of contact keeps traces of that contact in its vocabulary. One of the clearest traces is the lexical doublet: a pair or group of words that share a source or a meaning but differ in form, in shade of meaning, or in the situations where they are used. English has been shaped by Scandinavian settlement, the Norman Conquest and centuries of learned borrowing from Latin (Durkin Ph., 2014 & Baugh A.C., Cable T., 2013). Uzbek, in turn, absorbed a large layer of Persian and Arabic vocabulary through Islamic culture and classical literature, and later borrowed widely from Russian and, through Russian, from other European languages (Begmatov E., 1985).

As a result, both languages often have two or three words for one idea. English speakers choose between *ask*, *question* and *interrogate*; Uzbek speakers choose between *yurak*, *dil* and *qalb* for “heart”. The choice is rarely free. It depends on the meaning the speaker wants, on the style of the text, and on the relationship with the listener. Studying doublets therefore shows not only the history of a vocabulary but also how a modern language divides its resources between meaning and function.

Lexical doublets have been described separately for English and for Uzbek, but the two systems have seldom been compared. Such a comparison is useful because the two languages are unrelated and typologically different, yet both developed layered vocabularies through contact with prestige languages. A comparison can show whether similar historical conditions produce similar patterns of semantic and functional distribution.

The aim of the article is to identify the types of semantic variation and the patterns of functional distribution of lexical doublets in English and Uzbek. The objectives are: 1) to clarify the notion of the lexical doublet and its types; 2) to describe the sources of doublets in each language; 3) to classify the semantic relations within doublet pairs; 4) to describe how doublets are distributed across styles and registers; and 5) to outline the implications for teaching and translation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Notion of the Doublet in English Lexicology. In the English lexicological tradition, a doublet is defined mainly by etymology. I.V.Arnold describes etymological doublets as words that come from the same source but entered the language by different routes or at different times, such as *shirt* and *skirt* or *chief* and *chef* (Arnold I. V., 1986). R.S.Ginzburg and co-authors place doublets within the study of the etymological structure of English vocabulary and show that they usually differ in meaning, in use, or in both (Ginzburg R.S., Khidekel S.S., Knyazeva G.Yu., and Sankin A.A., 1979). Ph.Durkin provides a detailed history of borrowing into English and explains how words from Scandinavian, French and Latin came to sit side by side with native words (Durkin Ph., 2014). A.C.Baugh and T.Cable connect this layering with social history, especially with the period after 1066, when French became the language of power and Latin remained the language of learning (Baugh A.C., Cable T., 2013).

Recent work refines the notion. M.K.Smirnov traces how the concept of the etymological doublet has changed in lexicology and proposes a single definition: lexemes with a common etymon that may differ in meaning, form, pronunciation, morphology or part of speech (Smirnov M.K., 2024, 44-54). In a later study he shows that doublets can also consist of two native words that descend from the same Germanic or Indo-European root, such as *frost* and *freeze* or *flood* and *flow* (Smirnov M.K., 2025). W.Kamola-Uberman analyses the morphosemantics of selected English doublets and argues that following their semantic history helps to explain why absolute synonymy does not survive in a language (Uberman W., 2018, 9-39).

Doublets in Uzbek Linguistics. In Uzbek linguistics, the term *dublet* is used in a somewhat different sense. It usually refers to words of different origin with the same meaning, that is, to absolute or near-absolute synonyms, especially in terminology. E.Begmatov describes the historical layers of the Uzbek lexicon, namely the native Turkic layer, the Persian-Tajik layer, the Arabic layer and the Russian-European layer, and shows how they interact in the modern language (Begmatov E., 1985). A.Hojiyev's dictionary of Uzbek synonyms records many

synonymic rows in which words from these layers stand side by side (Hojiyev A., 1974). N.N.Rajabov distinguishes doublets from variants and from ordinary synonyms. He argues that doublets appear when the renewal of the language produces an alternative to a word already in use, and that doublets with a native equivalent tend to give way to it over time (Rajabov N. N., 2023, 29-36). O.Ya.Yusupov examines doublets borrowed from Arabic and Persian and shows that the earlier and later senses of such words developed through semantic broadening, narrowing, metaphor and metonymy (Yusupov O.Ya., 2020, 75-80).

Synonymy and Semantic Relations. The general theory of lexical semantics provides the tools for describing how doublets differ. D.A.Cruse distinguishes absolute, cognitive and near-synonyms and shows that absolute synonyms are extremely rare, because languages tend to give each word a distinct role (Cruse D.A., 1986). M.L.Murphy treats synonymy as a relation that depends on context and argues that two words are synonyms only for a particular purpose (Murphy M.L., 2003). These views explain why doublets rarely remain identical in meaning and function.

Research Gap. The review shows two separate traditions. English studies define the doublet by etymology, while Uzbek studies define it mainly by synonymy and by the coexistence of words from different layers. Both traditions describe the semantic and stylistic differences between doublets, but they do so with different terms and are rarely brought together. There is no study that applies one set of criteria to both languages and compares the resulting patterns of semantic variation and functional distribution. The present article attempts to fill this gap.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material consists of doublet pairs and groups selected from lexicological descriptions and dictionaries of English and Uzbek (Durkin Ph., 2014; Begmatov E., 1985; Ginzburg R.S., Khidekel S.S., Knyazeva G.Yu., and Sankin A.A., 1979; Hojiyev A., 1974) together with the author's own sentences that illustrate their use in context. The selection covers three groups for each language: etymological doublets, synonymic doublets of the native and borrowed type, and terminological doublets.

To make the two traditions comparable, the study uses two working definitions. An etymological doublet is a pair of words in one language that go back to the same source but entered the language by different routes or at different times (English *ward* and *guard*). A synonymic doublet is a pair of words of different origin that have the same or nearly the same denotative meaning (English *freedom* and *liberty*, Uzbek *erkin* and *ozod*). Both types are treated as lexical doublets in this article.

Four methods were applied. The descriptive method was used to present the doublets of each language. The comparative-typological method was used to compare the two systems. Componential analysis was used to identify the shared and distinctive semantic features within each pair. Contextual analysis was used to determine the stylistic and register restrictions of each member, based on the author's examples and on dictionary usage labels.

Limitations. The study is qualitative. It does not rely on a corpus and reports no frequency data. The patterns described below are based on lexicographic evidence and on typical contexts. A corpus study of written and spoken texts in both languages would be needed to measure how often each member of a pair is used in each register.

RESULTS

Sources of Doublets in the Two Languages. In English, doublets arise mainly from three sources. The first is the meeting of Old English with Old Norse, which produced pairs such as *shirt* (native) and *skirt* (Scandinavian), both going back to one Germanic root (Durkin Ph., 2014; Arnold I. V., 1986). The second is borrowing from French at different periods or from different dialects, which produced *warden* and *guardian*, *catch* and *chase*, and *cattle* and *chattel* (Baugh A.C., Cable T., 2013; Arnold I. V., 1986). The third is the borrowing of the same Latin word twice, first through French and later directly from Latin, which produced pairs such as *frail* and *fragile*, *loyal* and *legal*, and *poison* and *potion* (Ginzburg R.S., Khidekel S.S., Knyazeva G.Yu., and Sankin A.A., 1979). In addition, native words often stand beside French and Latin borrowings of similar meaning, forming synonymic rows such as *rise*, *mount* and *ascend*.

In Uzbek, the main sources are the Turkic, Persian, Arabic and Russian-European layers of the lexicon (Begmatov E., 1985). Native Turkic words stand beside Persian and Arabic borrowings, forming synonymic doublets and triplets: *erkin* (Turkic), *ozod* (Persian) and *hur* (Arabic) for “free”; *bilim* (Turkic) and *ilm* (Arabic) for “knowledge”; *el* (Turkic) and *xalq* (Arabic) for “people”; and *yurak* (Turkic), *dil* (Persian) and *qalb* (Arabic) for “heart”. A newer source is terminology, where an international term and a native coinage often coexist: *lingvistika* and *tilshunoslik*, *sinonim* and *ma’nodosh*, *antonim* and *zid ma’noli so’z* (Rajabov N. N., 2023, 29-36). Etymological doublets in the English sense also exist, for example when an Arabic word entered Uzbek both directly and through Persian, but they are less frequent (Yusupov O.Ya., 2020, 75-80).

Types of Semantic Variation. The comparison shows three types of semantic relation within doublet pairs.

Full divergence. The members of the pair have developed unrelated meanings, and the link between them is visible only through etymology. English examples are *hostel*, *hotel* and *hospital*, or *dish*, *disk* and *desk*. In the sentence *The students moved from the hostel to a cheap hotel near the hospital*, all three words are needed and cannot replace each other. In Uzbek, full divergence is rarer, but it is found in some Arabic borrowings whose two senses separated over time, as described by O.Yusupov (Yusupov O.Ya., 2020, 75-80).

Partial divergence. The members share a core meaning but differ in scope or in an additional feature. English *chief* and *chef* both go back to the idea of “head”, but *chef* has narrowed to the head of a kitchen. *Shirt* and *skirt* share the idea of a garment but name different pieces of clothing. In Uzbek, *el* and *xalq* both mean “people”, but *el* has kept the senses of “homeland” and “community” (*el-yurt*), while *xalq* has become the neutral and official term (*xalq ta’limi*, “public education”). Similarly, *bilim* is the general word for “knowledge”, whereas *ilm* tends to mean “science” or “learning” in a higher sense (*ilm-fan*).

Stylistic differentiation. The members have the same denotative meaning but differ in style, register or emotional colouring. This is the most common type in both

languages. In English, *ask*, *question* and *interrogate* describe the same act at different levels of formality: *She asked her friend*, *The committee questioned the minister*, *The police interrogated the suspect*. In Uzbek, *yurak*, *dil* and *qalb* all denote the heart, but *yurak* is the anatomical and everyday word (*yurak xastaligi*, “heart disease”), *dil* is poetic and emotional (*dilim ezildi*, “my heart ached”), and *qalb* is elevated and often spiritual (*pok qalb*, “a pure heart”). The pair *erkin* and *ozod* works in a similar way: *erkin* is neutral (*erkin vaqt*, “free time”), while *ozod* belongs to solemn and political discourse (*ozod xalq*, “a free nation”).

Functional Distribution. When the stylistic differences are arranged by register, both languages show a three-level model, summarised in Table I.

Table I. Functional distribution of doublets by register in English and Uzbek

Register level	English (source)	Uzbek (source)	Typical context
Everyday, neutral	rise, ask, fire, kingly (native)	yurak, erkin, bilim (Turkic)	conversation, everyday writing
Literary, expressive	mount, question, flame, royal (French)	dil, ozod (Persian)	fiction, poetry, journalism
Elevated, learned, official	ascend, interrogate, conflagration, regal (Latin)	qalb, hur, ilm (Arabic)	religious, scientific, official texts
Terminological	heart attack / myocardial infarction	tilshunoslik / lingvistika	education vs. specialist use

In English, native words occupy the everyday neutral level (*rise*, *ask*, *kingly*, *fire*), French borrowings occupy a more literary or courtly level (*mount*, *question*, *royal*, *flame*), and Latin borrowings occupy the learned and formal level (*ascend*, *interrogate*, *regal*, *conflagration*) (Baugh A.C., Cable T., 2013; Ginzburg R.S., Khidekel S.S., Knyazeva G.Yu., and Sankin A.A., 1979). In Uzbek, native Turkic words occupy the everyday level (*yurak*, *erkin*, *bilim*), Persian borrowings tend towards the literary and poetic level (*dil*, *ozod*), and Arabic borrowings occupy the elevated, religious and learned level (*qalb*, *hur*, *ilm*) (Begmatov E., 1985; Hojiyev

A., 1974). The parallel is not exact, because many Persian and Arabic words in Uzbek are fully neutral today, but the general direction is the same: the later and more learned the source, the higher the register.

Terminological doublets show a fourth pattern. In Uzbek, the international term and the native coinage often divide the field by audience: *lingvistika* is used in specialist and international contexts, while *tilshunoslik* is preferred in education and in official names (*tilshunoslik fakulteti*). In English, terminological doublets usually separate everyday and technical use, as in *heart attack* and *myocardial infarction*.

Instability of Absolute Doublets. Both languages show that complete identity of meaning and function is unstable. When two words are fully interchangeable, one of three things usually happens: they differentiate in meaning (*shirt* and *skirt*), they differentiate in style (*freedom* and *liberty*), or one of them drops out of use. N.N.Rajabov notes that Uzbek doublets with a native equivalent tend to give way to it (Rajabov N. N., 2023, 29-36), and D.A.Cruse explains this with the general principle that languages avoid absolute synonymy (Cruse A., 1986). In the history of English, many French borrowings displaced their native counterparts completely, while others survived only by taking a narrower or more formal role (Durkin Ph., 2014 & Baugh A.C., Cable T., 2013).

DISCUSSION

The results show that two unrelated languages, under similar historical conditions, developed similar ways of dividing their doublets. In both cases, contact with a prestige language of power or religion (French in England; Persian and Arabic in Central Asia) and with a language of learning (Latin; Arabic) created a layered vocabulary in which the source of a word partly determines its register. This supports the view, found in the work of A.C.Baugh and T.Cable for English (Baugh A.C., Cable T., 2013) and E.Begmatov for Uzbek (Begmatov E., 1985), that the social history of a language is reflected in the stylistic structure of its lexicon.

At the same time, the comparison reveals important differences. English doublets are more often etymological and more often fully divergent in meaning, because English borrowed the same Latin word several times. Uzbek doublets are more often synonymic and stylistically differentiated, because Uzbek borrowed

whole parallel words for the same concept from different languages. This difference explains why the two traditions use the term “doublet” in different ways: each tradition has generalised from the type that dominates in its own language (Smirnov M.K., 2024, 44-54; Rajabov N. N., 2023, 29-36).

The results also confirm the semantic principle that absolute synonymy is temporary (Uberman W., 2018, 9-39; Cruse A., 1986; Murphy M.L., 2003). In both languages, doublets either acquire distinct meanings or distinct functions, and those that do not are gradually lost. This makes doublets a useful indicator of ongoing change in the lexicon. The current competition between international terms and native coinages in Uzbek terminology is one example of this process.

For translation and teaching, the findings have practical consequences. An English – Uzbek translator must match not only the meaning of a doublet but also its register. For example, *regal* is closer to *shohona* or *podshohona* in elevated style than to the neutral *qirolik* (adjective), and Uzbek *qalb* in a solemn text may require *soul* or *heart* depending on the context. Teachers of English to Uzbek learners can use the familiar Uzbek pattern (Turkic, Persian, Arabic) as a bridge for explaining the English pattern (native, French, Latin), because learners already sense register differences in their own language.

CONCLUSION

The study has compared lexical doublets in English and Uzbek on the basis of one set of criteria. It has shown that in both languages doublets arose mainly through contact with prestige languages and that their members develop in three directions: full divergence of meaning, partial divergence, and stylistic differentiation. Stylistic differentiation is the most widespread type in both languages.

Both languages show a similar three-level functional model: native words in everyday neutral speech, earlier borrowings in literary and expressive speech, and learned borrowings in formal, religious, scientific and official discourse. English doublets are more often etymological and fully divergent, whereas Uzbek doublets are more often synonymic and stylistically marked. In both languages, absolute doublets are unstable and tend either to differentiate or to fall out of use.

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