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## Semantic differences between enantiosemy and antonymy in English and Uzbek

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**Annotation** *This article examines a question that is often oversimplified in descriptive semantics: Are enantiosemy and antonymy two variants of the same opposition, or do they represent different mechanisms of semantic organization? The research material consists, on the one hand, of canonical antonymic pairs in English and Uzbek, and on the other, of a purposefully selected comparative set of enantiosemic units from English and Uzbek sources. Methodologically, the study combines comparative-semantic analysis, contextual analysis, elements of a corpus-oriented approach, and descriptive quantification. The focus is not only on dictionary definitions but also on how opposing meanings are distributed across contexts, syntactic frames, and evaluative speech modes. The study shows that antonymy constitutes an interlexical, largely binary, and typically decontextualizable opposition, whereas enantiosemy is localized within a single form, depends much more heavily on context, and often exhibits asymmetry between opposing meanings. For English material, the most characteristic examples are lexically fixed terms such as sanction, oversight, dust, seed, clip, graduate, and solicitor; for the Uzbek material-not only lexical, but also grammatical, phraseological, and subjective-evaluative realizations, for example, to'ychi, tushmoq, chiqmoq, olmoq, yuz burmoq, as well as the literary usages of ofat and qiyomat. On this basis, it is demonstrated that enantiosemy cannot be reduced to either "internal antonymy" or ordinary polysemy: it is a special type of sign-internal opposition situated at the intersection of lexical semantics, pragmatics, and the historical development of meaning.*

**Keywords** *Enantiosemy, antonymy, semantic opposition, polysemy, contextual analysis, corpus approach, English, Uzbek, comparative linguistics*

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## Ingliz va o'zbek tillarida enantiosemiya va antonimiya o'rtasidagi semantik farqlar

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**Annotatsiya** *Mazkur maqola tavsifiy semantikada ko'pincha soddalashtirib talqin qilinadigan muammoni tahlil qiladi: enantiosemiya va antonimiya bir xil qarama-qarshilikning ikki ko'rinishimi yoki ular semantik tizimning turli mexanizmlarini ifodalaydimi? Tadqiqot material, bir tomondan, ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi kanonik antonimik juftliklardan, ikkinchi tomondan esa ingliz va o'zbek manbalaridan tanlab olingan enantiosemik birliklarning qiyosiy majmuasidan iborat. Metodologik jihatdan tadqiqot qiyosiy-semantik tahlil, kontekstual tahlil, korpusga yo'naltirilgan yondashuv elementlari hamda tavsifiy kvantifikatsiyani o'z ichiga oladi. E'tibor faqat*

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*lug'aviy ta'riflarga emas, balki qarama-qarshi ma'nolarning kontekstlar, sintaktik tuzilmalar va baholovchi nutq rejimlarida qanday taqsimlanishiga ham qaratiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, antonimiya asosan ikki alohida leksema o'rtasida yuzaga keladigan, ko'pincha binar va kontekstdan nisbatan mustaqil bo'lgan interleksik qarama-qarshilikni tashkil etadi. Enantiosemiya esa bitta shakl doirasida lokalizatsiyalangan bo'lib, kontekstga sezilarli darajada bog'liq va qarama-qarshi ma'nolar o'rtasida ko'pincha asimmetriya kuzatiladi. Ingliz tilidagi materialda enantiosemiya ko'proq lug'aviy jihatdan mustahkamlangan birliklar – sanction, oversight, dust, seed, clip, graduate, solicitor kabi so'zlar orqali namoyon bo'ladi. O'zbek tilida esa u nafaqat leksik, balki grammatik, frazeologik va subyektiv-baholovchi ko'rinishlarda ham yuzaga chiqadi, masalan: to'ychi, tushmoq, chiqmoq, olmoq, yuz burmoq, shuningdek, ofat va qiyomat kabi badiiy qo'llanishlarda. Shu asosda enantiosemiya "ichki antonimiya" yoki oddiy polisemiya doirasida izohlab bo'lmaydigan hodisa ekani asoslanadi. U leksik semantika, pragmatika va ma'no taraqqiyotining tarixiy jarayonlari kesishgan nuqtada joylashgan, belgi ichidagi o'ziga xos qarama-qarshilik turi sifatida talqin etiladi.*

**Kalit so'zlar** *Enantiosemiya, antonimiya, semantik qarama-qarshilik, polisemiya, kontekstual tahlil, korpus yondashuvi, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, qiyosiy tilshunoslik*

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## **Семантические различия между энантиосемией и антонимией в английском и узбекском языках**

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**Аннотация** *Настоящая статья рассматривает вопрос, который в описательной семантике часто упрощают: являются ли энантиосемия и антонимия двумя вариантами одной и той же оппозиции или же речь идет о разных механизмах смысловой организации? Материал исследования составили, с одной стороны, канонические антонимические пары английского и узбекского языков, а с другой - целенаправленно отобранный сравнительный набор энантиосемических единиц из английских и узбекских источников. Методологически работа сочетает сравнительно-семантический анализ, контекстуальный анализ, элементы корпусно-ориентированного подхода и описательную квантификацию. В центре внимания находятся не только словарные дефиниции, но и то, как противоположные значения распределяются по контекстам, синтаксическим рамкам и оценочным режимам речи. Исследование показывает, что антонимия представляет собой межлексемную, в значительной степени бинарную и обычно деконтекстуализуемую оппозицию, тогда как энантиосемия локализована внутри одной формы, намного сильнее зависит от контекста и нередко проявляет асимметрию между противоположными значениями. Для английского материала наиболее характерны лексически закрепленные случаи *tuna sanction, oversight, dust, seed, clip, graduate* и *solicitor*; для*

узбекского материала – не только лексические, но и грамматические, фразеологические и субъективно-оценочные реализации, например *to'uchi*, *tushmoq*, *chiqmoq*, *olmoq*, *uz burmoq*, а также художественные употребления *ofat* и *qiyomat*. На этой основе доказывается, что энантиосемию нельзя редуцировать ни к "внутренней антонимии", ни к обычной полисемии: это особый тип знаково-внутренней оппозиции, расположенный на границе лексической семантики, прагматики и исторического развития значения.

**Ключевые слова** Энантиосемия, антонимия, семантическая оппозиция, полисемия, контекстуальный анализ, корпусный подход, английский язык, узбекский язык, сравнительная лингвистика

### Introduction

In modern semantics, antonymy is usually described as a privileged lexical relation: speakers tend to ask for the "opposite" of a word much more naturally than for one of its possible synonyms, and antonyms themselves tend toward an almost binary organization (Jones, 2002; Jones et al., 2012). In the English-language tradition, this is also reflected in the fact that antonyms are primarily understood as correlated pairs of different words belonging to the same semantic scale or conceptual dimension. Corpus studies also show that antonyms do not merely exist in the dictionary but are regularly co-actualized in discourse within recurring contrastive constructions. In other words, antonymy is not a random opposition, but a stable structural relationship between two different lexemes (Murphy et al., 2009).

Enantiosemy works differently. In studies of English, Uzbek, and other languages, it is defined as the coexistence of opposing meanings within the same form, a word, and sometimes a phraseological unit (Klegr, 2013; Kajberuny & Hakobyan, 2020). The most important feature here lies not simply in the presence of opposition, but in the fact that this opposition is "wrapped" into a single shell and revealed through context, collocation, syntactic framework, genre, irony, or historically layered meanings. This is precisely why enantiosemy is

interpreted sometimes as a special case of polysemy, sometimes as a border zone between polysemy, antonymy, and homonymy, and sometimes as an independent type of semantic organization (Klegr, 2013).

A comparative study of English and Uzbek material is particularly fruitful precisely because the two traditions highlight different aspects of the phenomenon. In English descriptions, lexically established "Janus words" or contronyms often dominate—that is, instances where a single sign takes on opposite meanings in a lexicographically distinct form. In Uzbek studies, by contrast, the differences between linguistic and speech enantiosemy, between nominative and subjective-evaluative enantiosemy, as well as the role of case government, phraseology, and the speaker's communicative attitude, are clearly emphasized (Odilov, 2016; Narbayeva, 2024). Thus, the English material more often demonstrates the lexical fixation of the phenomenon, while the Uzbek material demonstrates its structural and pragmatic elaboration.

The initial hypothesis of this article is as follows: enantiosemy cannot be adequately described as "internal antonymy." This designation is only partially correct, because it captures the very fact of opposition but obscures crucial semantic parameters: the location of the opposition, the degree of

dependence on context, the imbalance of opposing meanings, and the fact that one meaning does not necessarily automatically evoke the other. The aim of this article is to show that for English and Uzbek, the distinction between enantiosemes and antonyms has not only terminological but also analytical significance: these phenomena organize the lexical system differently and behave differently in speech.

### Methods

Methodologically, this study was conducted as a comparative-semantic analysis based on published lexical, corpus, and theoretical data. This design is based on two strands of contemporary lexicology. The first is corpus-based research on antonymy, which shows that the opposition between different words can be studied through typical patterns of co-occurrence and function in discourse (Jones, 2002; Murphy et al., 2009). The second is research on enantiosemes, where opposing meanings are identified through the comparison of definitions, contexts, and valency conditions, rather than merely through an intuitive listing of "strange words." (Klegr, 2013; Kajberuny & Hakobyan, 2020).

The material was organized into two analytical sets. The first set is a control set: eight canonical antonymic pairs, four each from English and Uzbek. In the English section, pairs such as hot/cold, high/low, short/tall, female/male were used; in the Uzbek section—oq/qora, issiq/sovuq, katta/kichik, baland/past. These pairs were needed not for the sake of completeness of the list, but as a diagnostic standard: they allow us to verify whether the opposition is preserved outside a specific context and whether it is distributed across two different lexemes.

The second set—the main one—consisted of nineteen enantiosemic units, ten of which were English and nine Uzbek. The English material included fast, sanction, oversight, dust, seed, clip, cleave, graduate, audition, and solicitor. The Uzbek material included *ofat*, *ma'raka*, *qiyomat*, *to'ychi*, *tushmoq*, *chiqmoq*,

*olmoq*, *yuz burmoq*, and subjectively evaluative usages such as *bechora* / *jazolash* in an ironic context. Each example was selected only if the source either explicitly described the opposing meanings or demonstrated them through definitions and contexts.

Four diagnostic parameters were applied to each unit: the localization of the opposition, the degree of contextual dependence, the symmetry of the opposing meanings, and the type of structural carrier. Localization referred to whether the opposition was distributed between two different lexemes or contained within a single form. By contextual dependence, we mean whether a specific meaning can be reconstructed without syntactic, discursive, or genre-specific context. By symmetry, we mean whether the two poles are equal or whether one of them is secondary, figurative, terminologically restricted, or pragmatically marked. By type of carrier, we mean whether the opposition is purely lexical, grammatically conditioned, phraseological, or evaluative.

Since the sample was purpose-selected, the quantitative part of the study is descriptive rather than strictly inferential: percentages and proportions are interpreted as properties of the study sample, not as a frequency profile of the entire language system.

### Results

The first result is that antonymy and enantiosemes prove to be distinguishable even at the level of basic diagnosis. The control set of antonymic pairs showed an expectedly consistent pattern: in all eight cases, the opposition was decontextualizable and distributed between two different lexemes. The main set of enantiosemic units presented the opposite picture: in all cases, the opposition was located within a single form, and interpreting a specific pole required at least collocation, syntactic, or pragmatic cues. This confirms that the coincidence based on the criterion of "the presence of opposition" does not negate deeper structural differences between the two phenomena.

Criterion	Antonymy	Enantiosemy	English Example	Uzbek Example
<b>Locus of opposition</b>	Between two different lexemes	Within a single lexical form	<i>hot / cold vs. sanction</i>	<i>oq / qora vs. (to'ychi)</i>
<b>Context dependence</b>	Usually low	Usually high	<i>high / low vs. oversight</i>	<i>issiq / sovuq vs. yuz burmoq</i>
<b>Symmetry of poles</b>	Typically symmetrical and mutually exclusive	Often asymmetrical	<i>short / tall vs. cleave</i>	<i>katta / kichik vs. (qiyomat)</i>
<b>Carrier of opposition</b>	Lexical pair	Lexeme, term, grammatical structure, or phraseological unit	<i>female / male vs. sanction</i>	<i>baland / past vs. tushmoq</i>

**Table 1.**

The table summarizes the characteristics that recur in the theoretical literature on antonymy and enantiosemy and are confirmed by the comparative English-Uzbek data. Two diagnostic criteria are particularly revealing: the location of the opposition and the degree of contextual dependence. It is precisely these that most reliably distinguish the two phenomena and prevent enantiosemy from being unconditionally reduced to a variant of ordinary antonymy.

The English material demonstrates, first and foremost, lexically fixed enantiosemy. The word *fast* combines the meanings "fast" and "firmly fixed"; *sanction* - *to permit, to authorize* and *to punish with sanctions*; *oversight* - "supervision, control" and "omission, oversight"; *dust* - *to brush off dust* and *to sprinkle with powder*; *seed* - "to sow" and "to remove seeds"; *clip* - *to attach* and *to cut off*; *cleave* - "to stick to, cling to" and "to split, to cleave". In all these cases, the opposition is not presented as a ready-made pair of different words, but is packaged into a single form and becomes understandable only through valency, argument structure, or the context of use. This is precisely why the dictionary here does not replace context, but merely records its possibility (Klegr, 2013).

It is telling that English enantiosemy is often based not on direct logical negation, but on a shift in perspective regarding an event. In Y. Romanchuk's study, verbal enantionyms are categorized by types of semantic opposition: the largest groups are formed by the 'add/remove' (17%), 'give/get' (16%), 'positive emotion/negative emotion' (15%), 'subject/object' (10%), and 'action/counteraction' (10%). (Romanchuk, 2020) Thus, 'graduate' can mean both 'to confer a degree' and 'to complete an educational institution'; 'audition' can mean both 'to undergo an audition' and 'to listen to someone'; sometimes the opposition lies not in whether the action 'is' or 'is not' present, but in who exactly occupies the position of the subject and who that of the object. This is an important distinction: in antonymy, the opposition is more often scale-based or binary, whereas in enantiosemy, it is relational and perspective-based.

This is even more evident in terminology. In legal English, "solicitor" refers to the defense in one sense, and in another, it denotes a prosecutorial function, as in "Solicitor General." For a translator and for semantics, this is not merely polysemy: the word shifts between the fields of "defense" and "prosecution" while retaining the same form. Such a case differs fundamentally from a typical pair of antonyms

because the opposition is not distributed across two different names for roles. It arises within a single term and is activated by the legal system, the institutional context, and the phraseology.

The Uzbek data presents a more nuanced picture. In artistic and semantic descriptions, there are instances where a single word shifts between opposing connotations or socially significant contexts. For example, *ofat* can denote both 'disaster, misfortune' and, in artistic usage, 'dazzling beauty'; *ma'raka* oscillates between 'festive banquet/wedding celebration' and 'mourning gathering'; *qiyomat* can denote 'Judgment Day, disaster, upheaval,' but in colloquial evaluative usage-also something 'striking, very beautiful, or very powerful.' These examples are particularly important for comparison with antonymy: the opposition here is not expressed externally in pairs such as *yaxshi/yomon* or *issiq/sovuq*, but is condensed into a single form and interpreted through the cultural-linguistic context.

In Uzbek studies, however, enantiosemy is not limited to lexicon in the narrow sense. In the word *to'ychi*, the roles of 'guest' and 'host of the celebration' are contrasted; in subjective-evaluative enantiosemy, a word takes on the opposite evaluation under the influence of irony, as in the example where *bechora* ('poor

thing') and *jazolash* ('to punish') ironically mask privilege and reward rather than deprivation and punishment. Here it is already evident that for the Uzbek description, what becomes decisive is not simply the presence of two opposing meanings, but the distinction between nominative and subjective-evaluative enantiosemy. This distinction is important because it shows that the same mechanism can operate either at the level of an objectively fixed meaning or at the level of the speaker's linguistic strategy.

The Uzbek grammatical-phraseological layer is particularly expressive. In an article by Y. Odilov, it is shown that *tushmoq*, depending on different case and syntactic contexts, can denote opposite directions of movement, as well as the beginning and end of an action; *chiqmoq*, in certain constructions, combines meanings related to entering/exiting a space and even to marriage/divorce; *olmoq*, in combinations with different cases, expresses 'to hire' and 'to dismiss'; the phraseological unit *yuz burmoq* means both 'to turn toward someone/something' and 'to turn away' (Odilov, 2015a; 2015b). Here, enantiosemy differs structurally even from most English contronyms: the opposition is encoded not only by the lexical form but also by the morphosyntactic organization of the utterance.

Dataset	Number of units	Observation
Control antonyms	8	In all 8/8 cases, opposition is interpreted without special context and is distributed across two separate lexemes
English enantiosemy	10	In all 10/10 cases, the opposition is localized within a single form; profiles are predominantly lexically (dictionary) based
Uzbek enantiosemy	9	In at least 5/9 cases, morphosyntax, phraseology, or the evaluative mode of discourse play a decisive role

**Table 2.**

This descriptive quantification, of course, does not claim to provide a comprehensive picture of the entire language. But as a profile of the research sample, it is important: the

English material is represented to a greater extent by lexically fixed instances, whereas the Uzbek material clearly extends enantiosemy beyond lexical polysemy into the realm of case

government, phraseology, and pragmatic evaluation. This is the main comparative result of the article.

### Discussion

The results obtained allow us to draw several fundamental conclusions. First, the term “internal antonymy” is useful only as a preliminary heuristic. It captures the general fact of opposition but does not describe the mechanism of its unfolding. If antonymy is a relationship between two different names of poles, then enantiosemey is a tension within a single sign. This is precisely why they cannot be conflated without losing analytical precision. In antonymy, the speaker chooses between two forms; in enantiosemey, they choose between two readings of a single form. These are fundamentally different operations both for semantics and for the processing of meaning in speech.

Second, enantiosemey does indeed overlap with polysemy, but it is not reducible to it. Research by A. Kleger and H. Kadzberun with T. Akobyan shows that some cases of enantiosemey are motivated by internal connections between meanings and can therefore be described as a special type of polysemy (Kleger, 2013; Kajberuny & Hakobyan, 2020). However, the crucial point is that not all polysemy creates a semantic clash of opposites. Polysemy allows for a multitude of related meanings without mandatory opposition; enantiosemey, on the other hand, presupposes precisely an oppositional reading within a single form. Therefore, the following thesis seems more accurate: enantiosemey is not “ordinary polysemy,” but oppositionally marked polysemy of a borderline type.

Third, comparative data show that linguistic typology manifests itself here not in abstract “national characters,” but in research-observed profiles (Jones et al., 2012; Odilov, 2016). The English corpus, as described in dictionaries and corpus-oriented studies, tends toward lexically fixed words with opposite meanings, especially verbs and nouns whose duality is supported by argument structure or

historical semantic development. The Uzbek corpus, by contrast, clearly demonstrates the expansion of enantiosemey into the realms of governance, phraseology, and subjective evaluation. This does not imply that English lacks pragmatic or grammatical enantiosemey, or that Uzbek lacks lexical enantiosemey. However, the literature on which this study is based systematically highlights precisely this asymmetry in the analytical centers of gravity.

Fourth, not every English contronym is an equally “pure” case of enantiosemey. Some examples lie closer to the realm of historical homonymy or etymological convergence. The word *cleave* is particularly illustrative: in lexicographical practice, it is perceived as a word with opposite meanings, but historically and semantically, this is a peripheral case compared, for example, to *sanction* or *oversight*, where the opposite meanings are still retained within a single modern word form as connected and active. This leads to an important methodological clarification: enantiosemey has a center and a periphery, and therefore each example must be examined not only in terms of the “one form-two poles” effect, but also in terms of the degree of internal semantic coherence.

Finally, the distinction between antonymy and enantiosemey has practical implications. For translation, this means that a translator cannot rely on automatically searching for an external “opposite” equivalent if enantiosemey is at play in the source text: one must first determine which pole is activated. For lexicography, this means that a dictionary entry must record not merely a list of meanings, but the conditions under which they are contrasted. For teaching English and Uzbek, this means that enantiosemey units should be explained not as curious exceptions, but as systemic instances of the interaction between lexicon, context, and evaluation. Otherwise, the learner will either mistakenly reduce them to homonymy or attempt to interpret them according to the model of a standard antonymic pair, which in real-world texts often leads to a semantic error.

### Conclusion

A comparison of English and Uzbek material confirms the main hypothesis of this article: enantiosemy and antonymy represent two distinct types of semantic opposition. They are united by the presence of opposition, but are distinguished by at least four decisive parameters: the locus of opposition, dependence on context, the degree of symmetry between the poles, and the type of structural carrier. Antonymy organizes the field between two lexemes and is usually recognized outside of a specific context. Enantiosemy, on the other hand, places the opposition within a single form and makes context not an additional but a mandatory condition for interpretation.

The most significant comparative conclusion is that the English material in the studied literature exhibits a stronger lexical anchoring of enantiosemy, whereas the Uzbek material demonstrates its broader structural scope: from lexemes to case government, and from phraseology to ironic evaluation. Therefore, in a strict semantic description, enantiosemy should be interpreted as a specific, context-licensed type of sign-internal opposition, situated at the intersection of polysemy, pragmatics, and the historical development of meaning, yet not fully subsumed by any of these phenomena. It is precisely this interpretation that allows us to explain both the formal commonality of the word and the semantic opposition of its actualized meanings.

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