

THE OCCURRENCE OF LEXICAL DOUBLETS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

Oqbutayeva Shohzoda G'ofur qizi

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract

Lexical doublets, or pairs of words that share the same etymological origin but have developed different forms or meanings over time, represent an important phenomenon in historical and comparative linguistics. This paper examines the occurrence, formation, and development of lexical doublets in English and Uzbek, emphasizing their historical, phonological, and semantic aspects. By analyzing how these pairs emerge through borrowing, semantic differentiation, and morphological variation, this study highlights the linguistic processes that shape the lexicon of both languages. The findings reveal that while English doublets mainly result from multiple borrowings through different linguistic routes (e.g., Latin and French), Uzbek doublets emerge primarily through interactions with Persian, Arabic, Russian, and Turkic dialectal variations. This comparative perspective contributes to a deeper understanding of how contact, history, and cultural exchange influence lexical diversity in both English and Uzbek.

Keywords: lexical doublets, English language, Uzbek language, borrowing, etymology, linguistic contact

Introduction

Language is an evolving system that continually adapts to social, historical, and cultural contexts. One of the most fascinating outcomes of this evolution is the existence of lexical doublets—pairs of words that share a common etymological source but diverge in form, meaning, or usage. The study of lexical doublets offers valuable insights into how languages absorb external influences, adapt borrowed elements, and diversify their vocabulary over time.

In English, lexical doublets often arise from the historical layering of linguistic influences, particularly from Latin and French during the Middle English period. In contrast, the Uzbek language, as a member of the Turkic language family, demonstrates doublets resulting from centuries of contact with Arabic, Persian, Russian, and other Turkic dialects. Investigating these phenomena across two typologically different languages allows for a better understanding of universal and language-specific mechanisms of lexical development.

Theoretical Background

The concept of lexical doublets has been studied in the context of historical linguistics and lexicology. According to Jespersen (1954), doublets occur when a single etymological source gives rise to two distinct lexical items within the same language. These items may differ in phonetic form, morphological structure, semantic range, or stylistic use. Scholars such as Hock and Joseph (2009) have emphasized that doublets serve as a reflection of linguistic contact, social stratification, and borrowing processes.

In the English context, doublets often emerge from multiple borrowings of the same word via different channels. For instance, the Latin 'regalis' entered English through French as 'royal', while its direct Latin borrowing became 'regal'. Both words share the same root ('rex', 'king'), yet their stylistic and semantic usage diverged—'royal' being more common and 'regal' more formal. In Uzbek, however, doublets typically result from contact-induced variation—when the same word enters the language through different donor languages or dialects, acquiring subtle phonological or semantic distinctions.

Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Lexical Doublets

English Lexical Doublets

English has an unusually high number of lexical doublets due to its hybrid historical development. The Norman Conquest (1066) introduced a vast influx of French vocabulary that coexisted with Old English and later Latin influences. Common examples include:

- Ward / Guard – from Old English 'weard' and Old French 'garde', both ultimately from Proto-Germanic 'wardōn'.

- Chief / Chef – from Old French 'chef' meaning 'head', which diverged semantically in English: 'chief' (leader) and 'chef' (cook).

- Fragile / Frail – both from Latin 'fragilis', entering English through different routes.
- Hospital / Hostel / Hotel – from Latin 'hospitale', showing differentiation based on historical borrowing and social function.

Uzbek Lexical Doublets

Uzbek, as a Turkic language with a rich history of multilingual contact, also exhibits lexical doublets, though they emerge differently. Uzbek doublets frequently result from borrowings from Persian, Arabic, and Russian, as well as dialectal variation within Turkic. Examples include:

- Kitob / Kitap – both meaning 'book', from Arabic 'kitāb', with 'kitob' being the standard Uzbek form and 'kitap' appearing in dialects.

- Daryo / Nehr – both meaning 'river', with 'daryo' borrowed from Persian and 'nehr' from Arabic.

- Ilm / Bilim – both meaning 'knowledge', the former from Arabic 'ilm' and the latter a native Turkic formation.

- Rasm / Surat – both meaning 'picture' or 'image', with 'rasm' from Arabic and 'surat' from Persian.

Discussion

Although English and Uzbek are typologically unrelated, they share several mechanisms of lexical doubling, including historical borrowing and semantic differentiation. In English, doublets primarily result from layered borrowings through Latin, French, and Old English, whereas in Uzbek they emerge through multilingual contact within a sociocultural context shaped by Islam, Persian literature, and later Russian influence.

In both languages, doublets reveal patterns of register differentiation. For instance, English 'regal' and 'royal' differ in formality, while Uzbek 'ilm' and 'bilim' differ in source and cultural association—'ilm' being linked to religious and scholarly discourse, and 'bilim' to native, everyday contexts. Thus, doublets not only enrich the lexicon but also reflect cultural and ideological hierarchies embedded in language history.

Conclusion

The occurrence of lexical doublets in English and Uzbek demonstrates how linguistic systems evolve through continuous contact, adaptation, and differentiation. While English doublets are largely the result of historical borrowings through distinct linguistic channels, Uzbek doublets reveal the interaction of native and borrowed forms shaped by cultural exchange. Both languages showcase the dynamic nature of lexical development and the deep interconnection between linguistic history and cultural identity.

Future research may further explore the sociolinguistic aspects of lexical doublets, particularly their usage frequency, register distribution, and cognitive processing among speakers. Comparative studies of this kind enrich our understanding of how languages across different families respond to the universal forces of change and contact.

References

- Hock, H. H., & Joseph, B. D. (2009). Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship: An Introduction to Historical and Comparative Linguistics. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Jespersen, O. (1954). Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin. George Allen & Unwin.
- Matthews, P. H. (2007). The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics. Oxford University Press.
- Trask, R. L. (1996). Historical Linguistics. Arnold Publishers.
- Crystal, D. (2010). The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.