

## Etymological-Genetic Classification of Homonyms in Uzbek: Lexical Sources, Language Contact and Semantic Development

Ranokhon Mutalibjonovna Khudjaeva

Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor, Alfraganus University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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### Abstract

*Homonymy is one of the most complex phenomena in the lexical system of the Uzbek language because identical phonetic or graphic forms may represent lexical units with substantially different meanings and historical origins. This article investigates the etymological and genetic characteristics of Uzbek homonyms and identifies the principal linguistic and extralinguistic mechanisms responsible for their formation. Particular attention is devoted to the distinction between homonyms of common origin and genetically unrelated homonyms formed through lexical borrowing and formal convergence. The research considers lexical units associated with Turkic, Arabic, Persian-Tajik, Russian, French and other linguistic sources. The analysis demonstrates that language contact, phonetic adaptation, semantic specialization, historical semantic change and terminological development have significantly contributed to the formation of homonymic relations in Uzbek. Examples such as had, rang, karam, nafas, ko'r and xotin demonstrate different mechanisms of homonym formation. A comparative perspective involving English indicates that the historical composition of the lexicon and the intensity of interlingual contact directly influence the productivity of genetically unrelated homonyms. The findings emphasize the importance of an etymological-genetic approach for explanatory and bilingual lexicography, translation studies and the systematic description of Uzbek vocabulary.*

**Keywords:** Homonymy, etymology, genetic classification, Uzbek lexicon, language contact, lexical borrowing, semantic change, phonetic convergence, lexicography.

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### 1. Introduction

Language is a dynamic system that constantly changes under the influence of internal linguistic mechanisms and external historical circumstances. Changes in vocabulary are particularly sensitive to cultural interaction, migration, political transformation, scientific development and communication between linguistic communities. One of the lexical phenomena that clearly reflects such processes is homonymy.

Homonyms are lexical units that coincide in their phonetic and/or graphic form but differ in meaning. However, formal identity alone does not explain the historical relationship between such units. Some homonyms have a common etymological source, while others have emerged independently from different lexical sources and have only coincided formally during the historical development of the language.

The Uzbek language provides extensive material for investigating these processes. Its lexical system has

developed on the basis of the inherited Turkic vocabulary and has subsequently been enriched through prolonged interaction with Arabic, Persian-Tajik, Russian and other languages. Such interaction has produced different lexical layers and created favorable conditions for the emergence of genetically unrelated homonyms. The source article likewise emphasizes that the Uzbek vocabulary reflects centuries of contact with Arabic, Persian, Russian and neighboring linguistic traditions.

The purpose of this research is to examine the etymological-genetic characteristics of homonyms in Uzbek and to identify the main mechanisms through which homonymic series emerge.

The objectives are to distinguish common-origin and different-origin homonyms, determine the role of borrowing and language contact in their formation, analyze semantic and phonetic mechanisms of homonymization, and demonstrate the lexicographic **significance of genetic classification.**

## 2. Theoretical Background

The concept of homonymy occupies an important position in lexical semantics. From a synchronic perspective, homonyms are characterized primarily by formal coincidence and semantic difference. From a diachronic perspective, however, their classification requires investigation of historical origin.

This distinction is essential because two identical lexical forms may have completely different etymologies. Conversely, several contemporary meanings may historically derive from one lexical source but gradually become semantically independent.

Therefore, an etymological analysis allows homonyms to be divided into two principal categories:

1. homonyms of common historical origin;
2. homonyms of different historical origin.

The distinction between these categories is also reflected in the source article, where homonyms are divided according to whether their components have the same or different etymological origins.

Common-origin homonyms may develop through semantic differentiation, grammatical transformation or specialization. Different-origin homonyms, by contrast, may arise when unrelated lexical units enter the language

from different sources and subsequently acquire identical or similar forms.

## 3. Methodology

The study employs an etymological-genetic approach combined with descriptive, comparative and contextual methods.

The etymological method is used to identify the historical sources of lexical units. The genetic approach establishes whether the components of a homonymic series originate from the same lexical source or from unrelated languages.

Comparative analysis is applied to Uzbek and English in order to identify similarities and differences in the historical formation of homonymous vocabulary.

Contextual analysis is used to distinguish the meanings and functional characteristics of formally identical lexical units.

The analysis is based on examples of Uzbek homonyms discussed in lexicographic and linguistic research, including lexical units of Turkic, Arabic, Persian-Tajik, Russian and other origins.

## 4. Common-Origin Homonyms in Uzbek

One group of Uzbek homonyms consists of lexical units that are historically connected with the same source. Their meanings may nevertheless become differentiated as a result of long-term semantic development.

The lexical form *had* provides an illustrative example. In one meaning, *had* denotes “limit”, “boundary” or “restriction”. In another specialized usage, particularly in mathematics, it denotes a “term” or “member”. The source article identifies both forms as having entered Uzbek from Arabic and notes the differentiation of their meanings in contemporary usage.

This example demonstrates that a homonymic relationship does not always originate from borrowing two unrelated words. A common historical source may produce formally identical units whose meanings become differentiated over time.

Another mechanism can be observed in the word *ko‘r*.

The form *ko‘r* may function as an imperative associated with the verb *ko‘rmoq* (“to see”), while another lexical

unit ko‘r denotes a person deprived of sight (“blind”). The source material similarly treats this lexical coincidence as an example of semantic and functional differentiation within Uzbek.

Such examples demonstrate the necessity of combining synchronic and diachronic analysis. A purely synchronic dictionary may register two independent meanings, whereas an etymological dictionary can explain the historical processes that produced them.

## 5. Genetically Unrelated Homonyms

A particularly productive type of homonymy emerges when words originating from different languages become formally identical after entering Uzbek.

The Uzbek lexical system contains numerous borrowed elements from Arabic and Persian-Tajik. Historical cultural and literary contacts made these languages important sources of lexical enrichment.

For example, the form rang can be associated with the meaning “colour” or “paint” and, in another lexical interpretation, with the meaning “rank”. The source article identifies these forms as having different etymological origins and consequently treats them as a homonymic series of different origin.

Other examples include:

karam<sup>1</sup> – generosity, kindness;

karam<sup>2</sup> – a vegetable name;

nafas<sup>1</sup> – breathing;

nafas<sup>2</sup> – a short period of time.

The coexistence of such forms illustrates the difference between formal identity and genetic identity. Although speakers perceive the forms as identical in contemporary Uzbek, their historical sources may be unrelated.

This phenomenon can be represented as:

**Source A → borrowing → phonetic adaptation → lexical integration**

**Source B → borrowing → phonetic adaptation → lexical integration**

A + B → formal coincidence → homonymic relation

Consequently, homonymy may be regarded as a secondary result of lexical interaction rather than as a direct consequence of semantic development.

## 6. Arabic and Persian-Tajik Influence

Arabic and Persian-Tajik have played an important role in the historical formation of Uzbek vocabulary. The impact of these languages is reflected not only in general vocabulary but also in homonymic relations.

Arabic lexical elements entered Uzbek through religious, scholarly, literary and administrative communication. Persian-Tajik influence developed through long-term geographical and cultural interaction.

The source article notes that genetically unrelated homonyms in Uzbek frequently originate from Arabic, Persian-Tajik and Russian, whereas English has experienced substantial influence from French, Scandinavian, Indo-European, Germanic and Latin sources.

The presence of several historical lexical layers increases the probability of formal convergence. A borrowed word may gradually adapt to Uzbek phonological and grammatical patterns and eventually coincide with another lexical unit.

Therefore, the analysis of Uzbek homonyms requires attention to the historical chronology of borrowing.

## 7. Russian and European Lexical Influence

Russian became a major source of lexical enrichment during the modern historical period. Alongside Russian vocabulary itself, Russian-mediated borrowing also facilitated the introduction of European scientific, technical, administrative and cultural terminology.

Such lexical elements entered an already established Uzbek lexical system. Some remained recognizable as foreign borrowings, whereas others became fully integrated.

When a borrowed lexical unit coincides formally with an existing word, a new homonymic relationship may emerge.

This process confirms that lexical borrowing is not simply the mechanical transfer of words from one language to another. Borrowed units undergo phonetic, morphological, semantic and functional adaptation.

## 8. Intralinguistic Mechanisms of Homonym Formation

External borrowing is not the only source of homonymy. Internal linguistic development also contributes to the formation of homonymous relations.

The principal intralinguistic mechanisms include:

**semantic differentiation**, whereby one lexical form develops independent meanings;

**phonetic convergence**, whereby historically different forms become identical as a result of sound change;

**grammatical transformation**, whereby grammatical forms become lexicalized;

**terminological specialization**, whereby a general word acquires a specialized scientific or technical meaning;

**word-formation processes**, whereby newly formed units coincide formally with existing lexical items.

These mechanisms interact with external factors and may operate simultaneously.

For example, a borrowed lexical item may first enter Uzbek through language contact, then undergo phonetic adaptation and subsequently acquire a specialized meaning. At the final stage, it may coincide formally with an existing lexical unit.

## 9. Extralinguistic Factors

Language does not develop independently from society. Historical events, political changes, migration, economic relations and cultural exchange directly influence vocabulary.

The source article emphasizes the significance of extralinguistic factors and refers to socio-political conditions as an important component of language development.

For Uzbek, the following factors are particularly significant:

- historical interaction with neighbouring peoples;
- Arabic cultural and scholarly influence;
- Persian-Tajik literary and cultural relations;

- Russian political and administrative influence;
- scientific and educational modernization;
- globalization and contemporary international communication.

Each of these processes has contributed to lexical enrichment and consequently to the development of formal coincidences among words of different origins.

## 10. Comparative Analysis of Uzbek and English

The comparison of Uzbek and English reveals both universal and language-specific mechanisms of homonym formation.

English contains extensive lexical layers originating from Germanic, Scandinavian, French, Latin and Greek. Long-term interaction between these lexical layers has created numerous opportunities for unrelated words to converge formally.

Uzbek has a different historical configuration. Its lexical system contains an inherited Turkic foundation together with significant Arabic, Persian-Tajik and Russian layers.

Thus, although both languages possess genetically unrelated homonyms, their source distribution is different.

The source article specifically observes that English genetically unrelated homonyms have developed from French, Scandinavian, Indo-European, Germanic and Latin sources, whereas Uzbek examples are especially associated with Arabic, Persian-Tajik and Russian lexical influence.

This difference confirms that the productivity of homonymy is connected with the historical structure of the vocabulary.

## 11. Homonymy and Lexicography

The genetic classification of homonyms has considerable practical significance for lexicography.

In explanatory dictionaries, genetically unrelated homonyms should ideally be presented as independent lexical entries when their meanings and origins are sufficiently differentiated.

An etymological description should indicate:

- the historical source;
- the source language;
- the original meaning;
- the direction of semantic development;
- the phonetic adaptation;
- the contemporary lexical function.

This information is especially important for bilingual dictionaries and translation resources because formally identical words may require completely different equivalents in another language.

For example, the translation of *rang* depends entirely on contextual meaning. The translator must determine whether the lexical unit denotes colour or rank before selecting an equivalent.

Consequently, etymological information can support more accurate dictionary construction and translation

decisions.

## 12. Results and Discussion

The analysis indicates that Uzbek homonymy represents the interaction of several historical and linguistic processes.

First, homonymic relations may arise from a common lexical source through semantic differentiation.

Second, unrelated words may become homonymous as a consequence of borrowing and phonetic adaptation.

Third, terminology and specialization may create additional semantic differentiation.

Fourth, historical language contact increases the probability of lexical convergence.

The investigated examples can be summarized as follows:

| Homonym      | Meaning 1                                  | Meaning 2            | Main mechanism                                 |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>had</i>   | limit, boundary                            | mathematical term    | semantic differentiation / specialization      |
| <i>rang</i>  | colour, paint                              | rank                 | different lexical origins                      |
| <i>karam</i> | generosity                                 | vegetable name       | different lexical sources                      |
| <i>nafas</i> | breathing                                  | short period of time | semantic differentiation / lexical coincidence |
| <i>ko'r</i>  | see!                                       | blind                | grammatical and lexical differentiation        |
| <i>xotin</i> | woman of high social status / ruler's wife | wife                 | historical semantic development                |

The table demonstrates that homonymy cannot be reduced to a single mechanism. Different lexical units require different historical explanations.

## 13. Conclusion

The etymological-genetic analysis of Uzbek homonyms demonstrates that homonymy is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by both internal linguistic development and external historical interaction.

Two major genetic types can be distinguished: homonyms of common origin and homonyms of different origin. The first type is associated primarily with semantic differentiation, grammatical transformation and specialization. The second type is closely related to borrowing, language contact, phonetic adaptation and formal convergence.

The Uzbek language is particularly suitable for such

research because its lexical system represents the interaction of several historical linguistic layers. Arabic, Persian-Tajik and Russian have made substantial contributions to the development of its vocabulary, while the inherited Turkic layer provides the fundamental structural basis.

The comparison with English demonstrates that genetically unrelated homonyms are a universal lexical phenomenon, but their quantitative and qualitative characteristics depend on the historical configuration of each language.

The results also have direct implications for lexicography and translation. Identical forms should not be automatically treated as genetically related units. Their etymological origins, semantic development and contextual functions must be considered separately.

An etymological-genetic approach therefore provides a reliable methodological basis for the classification and description of Uzbek homonyms and contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical development of the Uzbek lexical system.

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