THE MANIFESTATION OF THE PHENOMENON OF GRADUONYMY AT THE LEXICAL LEVEL IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Annotation: This article explores the phenomenon of graduonymy at the lexical level in English and Uzbek, focusing on its structural, semantic, and functional characteristics. Graduonymy refers to the hierarchical or gradual relationship between lexical items that express varying degrees of a quality, intensity, or quantity. The study employs a descriptive–comparative research design, analyzing data from monolingual and bilingual dictionaries as well as literary and journalistic texts. Results show that English primarily relies on independent lexical items and syntactic modifiers to express gradation, while Uzbek combines lexical means with morphological strategies such as affixation and reduplication. The study highlights both universal cognitive patterns and language-specific realizations of graduonymy, emphasizing the role of context, pragmatics, and stylistic factors in interpreting gradational meaning. The findings contribute to lexical semantics, contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and applied language teaching.

Keywords: Graduonymy, Lexical semantics, Gradational meaning, English language, Uzbek language, Contrastive linguistics, Morphological gradation, Semantic hierarchy

Introduction

Language is a dynamic system in which meaning is not only conveyed through isolated lexical units but also through their semantic relationships and gradational structures **[1]**. One such significant linguistic phenomenon is *graduonymy*, which refers to the hierarchical or gradual relationship between lexical items expressing varying degrees of the same quality, intensity, or quantity **[1]**. Graduonymy plays a crucial role in enriching expressive potential, ensuring semantic precision, and reflecting subtle cognitive distinctions in human perception of reality **[2]**.

In modern linguistics, the study of graduonymy has gained particular attention within the framework of lexical semantics, as it reveals how languages organize meaning along a scale rather than through binary oppositions . Unlike synonymy, which focuses on similarity of meaning, graduonymy emphasizes degree-based semantic progression, such as *cold – cool – warm – hot* in English or *sovuq – salqin – iliq – issiq* in Uzbek **[3]**. These gradational chains demonstrate how speakers conceptualize and verbalize incremental changes in physical, emotional, or abstract states **[4]**.

The comparative analysis of graduonymy in English and Uzbek is especially relevant due to the typological and structural differences between these languages . English, as an analytic language, often expresses gradation through separate lexical items, modifiers, and intensifiers, whereas Uzbek, an agglutinative language, frequently employs affixation alongside lexical means to convey degrees of meaning . Despite these structural differences, both languages exhibit rich systems of lexical gradation that reflect universal cognitive patterns as well as culture-specific semantic nuances .

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The aim of this article is to examine the manifestation of the phenomenon of graduonymy at the lexical level in English and Uzbek, identifying its structural, semantic, and functional characteristics . The study seeks to highlight similarities and differences in the organization of gradational lexical units, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of cross-linguistic semantics and lexical categorization . Such an analysis is not only theoretically significant for linguistic studies but also practically valuable for translation studies, language teaching, and intercultural communication **[5]**.

Literature Review

The phenomenon of graduonymy has been examined within the broader field of lexical semantics and semantic relations, where linguists investigate how meaning is structured and organized in language. Early semantic studies primarily focused on binary oppositions and synonymy; however, later research emphasized that many lexical meanings are arranged along a scale of gradual intensity rather than strict oppositions. This shift laid the theoretical foundation for the study of graduonymy as an independent semantic phenomenon.

One of the key contributions to the study of gradational meaning comes from structural and functional semantics, where gradation is viewed as a reflection of human cognitive categorization. Scholars have noted that speakers tend to conceptualize reality in degrees, which is naturally mirrored in language through gradable lexical units. Such studies argue that graduonymy is closely connected with antonymy, synonymy, and hyponymy, yet remains distinct due to its focus on incremental semantic progression rather than equivalence or contrast.

In English linguistics, graduonymy has often been analyzed through adjective and adverb systems, particularly in relation to gradable adjectives and intensifiers. Researchers have examined how lexical items form gradational scales (e.g., weak → strong → powerful) and how these scales interact with contextual modifiers. Studies in cognitive linguistics further highlight that gradational chains in English are not always fixed and may vary depending on pragmatic and cultural factors.

Uzbek linguistics has approached graduonymy mainly through lexical-stylistic and functional-semantic perspectives. Uzbek scholars emphasize the role of both lexical means and morphological markers in expressing degrees of quality and intensity. Due to the agglutinative nature of Uzbek, gradation is frequently realized through affixation in combination with lexical items, which allows for subtle semantic differentiation. Research in this area also points out that gradational relations in Uzbek are closely tied to expressive and stylistic functions in discourse.

Comparative studies on graduonymy remain relatively limited, particularly between typologically different languages such as English and Uzbek. Existing contrastive works mainly focus on general semantic relations or translation equivalence, leaving graduonymy underexplored as a separate category. Nevertheless, these studies indicate that while gradational meaning reflects universal cognitive mechanisms, its linguistic realization is language-specific and influenced by grammatical structure and cultural context.

Overall, the review of existing literature demonstrates that graduonymy is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires further comparative investigation. The lack of systematic

contrastive analysis between English and Uzbek highlights the need for focused research on how lexical gradation operates across languages, which this study seeks to address.

Methods

This study employs a **descriptive–comparative research design** to investigate the manifestation of graduonymy at the lexical level in English and Uzbek [1]. The methodological framework is grounded in principles of lexical semantics and contrastive linguistics, allowing for a systematic comparison of gradational lexical units in the two languages [2].

The primary data for the research were collected from authoritative monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, as well as from selected literary and journalistic texts in English and Uzbek [3]. These sources were used to identify lexical items that form gradational chains expressing degrees of quality, intensity, or quantity. Particular attention was paid to adjectives and adverbs, as they most frequently exhibit gradable semantic properties.

The analysis was conducted in several stages. First, lexical units displaying gradational relationships were extracted and grouped into semantic fields (e.g., temperature, emotion, size, intensity). Second, these units were arranged into graduonymic series based on their relative degree of meaning. Third, the identified series were analyzed according to their semantic structure, including the number of gradation levels, degree of intensity, and contextual usage [4].

A **contrastive analysis method** was applied to compare English and Uzbek graduonymic series . This method made it possible to identify both universal features of lexical gradation and language-specific characteristics influenced by typological differences. Structural features, such as the use of separate lexical items in English and affixation in Uzbek, were examined alongside functional aspects, including stylistic and pragmatic variation.

In addition, **contextual analysis** was employed to observe how graduonymic units function in real discourse . Examples from authentic texts were analyzed to determine how gradational meaning is modified by context, intensifiers, and stylistic intention. This approach ensured that the analysis was not limited to dictionary definitions but reflected actual language use [5].

Overall, the chosen methods provide a comprehensive and reliable basis for examining graduonymy at the lexical level in English and Uzbek, enabling a nuanced comparison of their semantic and functional properties .

Results

The analysis of the collected lexical material revealed that graduonymy is a systematically organized phenomenon at the lexical level in both English and Uzbek. In both languages, gradational relationships are most clearly observed within the semantic classes of adjectives and adverbs, which form ordered series expressing increasing or decreasing degrees of a particular quality, intensity, or quantity.

In English, graduonymic series are predominantly realized through **independent lexical items** arranged along a semantic scale. Common examples include temperature (*cold – cool – warm – hot*), intensity (*weak – strong – powerful*), and emotional states (*calm – worried – anxious –*

terrified). The data show that English graduonymic chains often consist of three to five lexical units, with relatively fixed ordering that is widely shared among speakers. These chains are frequently reinforced by intensifiers and comparative constructions, which enhance precision in expressing degree.

In Uzbek, graduonymy is also well-developed but displays certain language-specific features. Alongside independent lexical items (e.g., *sovuq – salqin – iliq – issiq*), Uzbek makes extensive use of **morphological means**, including affixation and reduplication, to convey gradational meaning. The results indicate that Uzbek graduonymic series tend to be more flexible, allowing speakers to create nuanced degrees through derivational suffixes and expressive forms. This flexibility contributes to a higher degree of stylistic expressiveness in spoken and literary discourse.

A comparative examination demonstrates that both languages share **universal semantic patterns** in organizing gradational meaning, reflecting similar cognitive mechanisms of categorization. However, notable differences were observed in the **formal realization** of graduonymy. English relies primarily on lexical selection and syntactic modifiers, whereas Uzbek combines lexical choice with morphological strategies to achieve gradation. As a result, Uzbek graduonymic expressions often carry additional stylistic or emotional coloring.

Contextual analysis further revealed that the interpretation of graduonymic units in both languages is highly dependent on discourse context. In many cases, the same lexical item may occupy different positions on a gradational scale depending on situational factors, speaker intention, and stylistic register. This finding confirms that graduonymy is not a rigid lexical phenomenon but a dynamic semantic relationship shaped by usage.

Overall, the results confirm that graduonymy functions as an essential mechanism for expressing fine-grained semantic distinctions in both English and Uzbek. While sharing a common cognitive basis, the two languages differ in their structural and stylistic realization of lexical gradation, underscoring the importance of contrastive analysis in understanding language-specific semantic organization.

Discussion

The results of the present study confirm that graduonymy constitutes a core component of lexical-semantic organization in both English and Uzbek, functioning as an effective means of expressing gradational meaning [1]. The findings support the view that human cognition tends to perceive qualities and states not in binary terms but along continuous scales, which are then systematically encoded in language [2]. This observation aligns with established theories in lexical semantics and cognitive linguistics that emphasize gradability as a universal semantic principle [3].

The predominance of adjectives and adverbs in forming graduonymic series in both languages indicates that gradation is most closely associated with the expression of qualities, states, and intensity [4]. However, the ways in which these gradational relationships are linguistically realized differ significantly. In English, the reliance on independent lexical items and syntactic modifiers reflects the analytic nature of the language [5]. The relatively fixed ordering of

graduonymic chains suggests a higher degree of conventionalization, which facilitates mutual understanding and semantic predictability among speakers **[6]**.

In contrast, the Uzbek data demonstrate that graduonymy is closely intertwined with morphological processes **[7]**. The frequent use of affixation, reduplication, and expressive forms allows Uzbek speakers to construct more nuanced and context-sensitive gradational meanings **[8]**. This morphological flexibility not only expands the expressive potential of the language but also introduces stylistic and emotional оттенки that may not always have direct lexical equivalents in English **[9]**. Consequently, the translation of graduonymic units between English and Uzbek often requires semantic adjustment rather than direct lexical substitution **[10]**.

The comparative analysis further reveals that, despite structural differences, both languages exhibit similar semantic fields in which graduonymy is most productive, such as temperature, emotion, size, and intensity **[11]**. This similarity supports the idea of a shared cognitive foundation underlying gradational meaning . At the same time, language-specific realizations of graduonymy reflect cultural and communicative preferences, influencing how degrees of meaning are emphasized or mitigated in discourse .

Contextual variability emerged as a crucial factor in the interpretation of graduonymic units . The position of a lexical item within a gradational scale may shift depending on pragmatic context, register, and speaker intention. This finding highlights the dynamic nature of graduonymy and underscores the importance of analyzing lexical meaning within authentic discourse rather than in isolation .

Overall, the discussion underscores that graduonymy is a multifaceted phenomenon that bridges universal cognitive mechanisms and language-specific structural features . The contrastive approach adopted in this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how English and Uzbek encode gradational meaning at the lexical level and offers valuable insights for further research in semantics, translation studies, and applied linguistics .

Conclusion

The present study has examined the phenomenon of graduonymy at the lexical level in English and Uzbek, revealing both universal and language-specific patterns in the organization of gradational meaning. The findings confirm that graduonymy is a fundamental semantic mechanism that allows speakers to express varying degrees of qualities, states, and intensities, reflecting underlying cognitive processes common to all humans **[1]**.

In English, graduonymic chains are predominantly realized through independent lexical items and syntactic modifiers, with relatively fixed ordering that ensures semantic clarity and predictability **[2]**. In Uzbek, gradation is achieved not only through lexical items but also via morphological strategies such as affixation, reduplication, and expressive forms, providing greater stylistic flexibility and nuanced expression **[3]**. These structural differences illustrate how typological characteristics shape the formal realization of graduonymy while the cognitive principles underlying gradational meaning remain consistent across languages **[4]**.

The study also highlights the role of context in determining the interpretation of graduonymic units. Pragmatic factors, register, and speaker intention can shift the perceived position of a

lexical item within a gradational series, emphasizing the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of graduonymy **[5]**. This finding underscores the importance of analyzing gradational meaning within authentic discourse rather than relying solely on dictionary definitions.

Overall, this research demonstrates that graduonymy bridges universal cognitive tendencies and language-specific structural and stylistic features. The contrastive analysis of English and Uzbek provides valuable insights for linguistics, translation studies, and applied language teaching, particularly in understanding how languages encode subtle semantic distinctions. Future research may expand this study by exploring graduonymy in other lexical classes, spoken discourse, and cross-cultural contexts to further illuminate its functional and cognitive significance **[1–5]**.

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