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SEMANTIC TRANSFORMATION OF ADJECTIVE LEXEMES AND ITS REFLECTION IN THE THESAURUS

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Annotation: This article is devoted to the analysis of semantic transformations (meaning expansion and narrowing) observed in Uzbek adjective lexemes and to the application of these analytical results as a linguistic basis for constructing a thesaurus model. The study examines the processes in which adjectives deviate from their original meanings and acquire new connotative and extralinguistic sememes (for example, in the cases of the adjectives "oq" [white], "sariq" [yellow], and "xususiy" [private]).

Keywords: adjective lexemes, semantic transformation, meaning expansion, meaning narrowing, polysemy, intensity, gradation, thesaurus, WordNet.

Introduction: In linguistics, semantic shift in adjective word classes serves to expand the semantic scope of language units and to enhance their expressive and descriptive potential. While adjectives in their primary lexical meaning denote distinctive attributes and properties of objects—such as color, shape, size, or quality—over time, many adjective lexemes undergo processes of meaning expansion or narrowing. From this perspective, recording the processes of semantic shift in adjective lexemes holds particular importance in thesaurus construction. Indeed, along with such semantic relations as synonymy and antonymy, new connotative meanings that emerge as a result of semantic broadening or narrowing in lexemes also contribute to the enrichment of the thesaurus.

Main Part: The semantic change of lexemes refers to the process by which language units, over time, acquire new shades of meaning or modify their existing ones. Linguists of the 19th century deeply understood the essence of this phenomenon and conducted scientific research in this field using comparative methods [1]. Semantic changes (broadening and narrowing of meaning) have long been systematically studied by scholars in terms of their causes and types. The main focus is placed on the shift of a word's meaning toward positive or negative connotations, as well as on the processes of broadening and narrowing. According to researchers, broadening and narrowing are the principal types of semantic change, while other forms represent secondary branches [2]. This theoretical approach is especially important in the study of adjective lexemes and in constructing their



thesaurus models, as semantic broadening phenomena are increasingly observed in adjectives today.

Alongside such semantic changes, it is also essential to note that words which are nearly synonymous can differ in their degree of intensity. For example, in English, adjectives such as acceptable, good, great, and superb are similar in meaning but differ in intensity. A native speaker would naturally rank them as acceptable < good < great < superb. Similarly, adjectives can express gradation not only through degree adverbs (e.g., very big, extremely big) but also through entirely different words (e.g., huge, gigantic, gargantuan) [6].

In lexical resources (dictionaries, WordNet, thesauri), information about the intensity hierarchy of words is often missing; however, such data are crucial for Natural Language Processing (NLP) tasks such as automatic speech understanding and generation, as well as for language learners. Studies show that the intensity hierarchy can be derived from web-scale corpus data through lexical-semantic patterns such as “good but not great” or “hot and almost scorching.” Such analyses are fundamental in determining the gradation within the semantic field of adjectives, which serves as a linguistic foundation for thesaurus construction.

According to Uzbek linguist M. Sodiqova, the adjective *oq* (white) not only denotes color when it precedes a noun, but also conveys abstract meanings such as purity and sincerity. For example: “*Uni sen xalqqa yetkaz. Men senga oq fotiha beraman*” (T. Malik, Shaytanat) or “*Farishtaday oq ko'ngil bu ayolga qo'shnilar o'z sirlarini ishonishardi*.” In these contexts, *oq* expresses concepts like pure intention, honesty, and sincerity. However, in some contexts, the lexeme *oq* can also acquire negative connotations, as in *oq sehr* (white magic) or *oq bilak xonim* (a lady of questionable reputation). Although *oq* generally carries positive associations, contextual and cultural factors can produce negative connotations. Thus, the expanded semantic field of *oq* through meaning shift forms semantic connections between synsets in the thesaurus and provides a basis for building lexical networks in computational linguistics.

The color adjective *sariq* (yellow), in its original meaning, refers to bright and warm tones, typically used to describe sunlight, ripe grains, and autumnal landscapes. In Uzbek, *sariq* has long been actively used to describe natural color diversity. Its main function was to indicate the visual properties of objects—their color or shade. Over time, however, *sariq* evolved beyond denoting color and acquired a range of figurative meanings. In literary and oral speech, yellow symbolizes transience, fading, and change. For instance, *sariq yaproq* (yellow leaf) signifies the decay and transformation of autumn, while *sariq yuz* (yellow face) has come to denote illness or fatigue.



Consider: "*Sariq ofat Kaspiydan Tyanshangacha minglab kilometr masofani egallaganmish*" or "*Uni sariq iblis deb bekorga aytishmagan*." In these examples, the expression **sariq ofat** symbolizes a destructive locust invasion, while **sariq iblis** is used to describe a deadly epidemic such as plague.

In both cases, sariq undergoes semantic broadening, acquiring negative connotations associated with danger, destruction, and threat.

Culturally, the adjective sariq also exhibits unique semantic extensions, symbolizing jealousy, envy, low social status, sensationalism, warning, or cowardice [4]. These features enrich the cultural and psychological associations of the color. Consequently, the figurative meanings of sariq serve as a foundation for semantic branching in a thesaurus, thereby expanding its semantic scope.

Linguist R. Suvanova, who studied the processes of semantic shift in adjectives, notes that such phenomena occur under two extralinguistic factors [3]:

1. The denotatum of the base meaning participates as an element within the denotatum of the derived meaning: *Gapi tuturiqsiz odamning o'zi tuturiqsiz* ("An inconsistent person's speech is inconsistent"). The first *tuturiqsiz* expresses the base meaning "incoherent," while the second conveys the derived meaning "unreliable in speech."

2. The denotatum of the base meaning acts as an influencing factor, while that of the derived meaning serves as a receiving factor: *bepul* – "without money," "free of charge" (*Bepul tomosha* – "Free performance"). According to Suvanova's view, meaning shifts in adjectives occur not only due to internal linguistic factors but also under external, extralinguistic influences. This, in turn, enhances their polysemantic nature and complicates their representation in thesauri, since a single lexeme may carry different semantic loads depending on the context. For instance, *tuturiqsiz* shifts from "incoherent" to "unreliable in speech," showing semantic broadening, whereas *bepul* demonstrates semantic narrowing. Therefore, when constructing a thesaurus of adjective lexemes, it is essential to present their primary and derived meanings in separate layers and indicate their semantic connections (broadening and narrowing).

During the development of language, the semantic scope of adjectives often broadens or narrows in direct correlation with socio-political changes in society. For example, the lexeme *xususiy* (private) in Uzbek originally denoted individuality and is defined in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language [4] as:

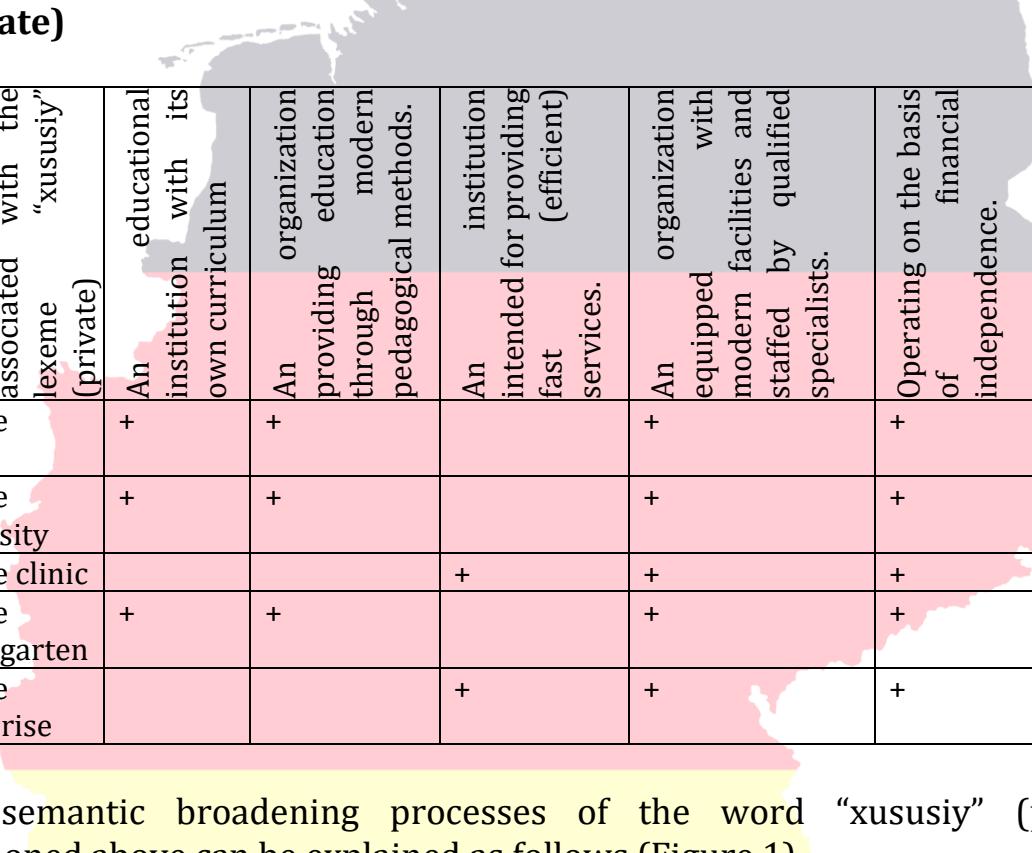
1. Belonging solely to one person; personal; individual — *xususiy do'kon* (private shop).



2. Devoted to or covering a specific topic or issue — *xususiy masala* (particular issue).

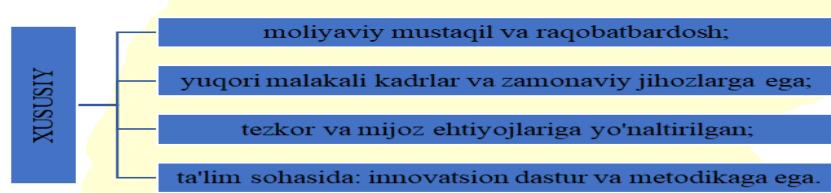
With the rise of the market economy and societal transformation during the independence period, this lexeme acquired a modern semantic layer. Today, phrases like *xususiy maktab* (private school), *xususiy universitet* (private university), and *xususiy klinika* (private clinic) extend beyond the notion of personal ownership to encompass meanings of modernity, financial independence, and competitiveness (see Table 1).

The Process of Meaning Expansion of the Lexeme “Xususiy” (Private)



Newly emerged combinations associated with the lexeme “xususiy” (private)	An educational institution with its own curriculum	An organization providing education through modern pedagogical methods.	An institution intended for providing fast services.	An organization equipped with modern facilities and staffed by qualified specialists.	Operating on the basis of financial independence.	Oriented toward competition.
Private school	+	+		+	+	+
Private university	+	+		+	+	+
Private clinic			+	+	+	+
Private kindergarten	+	+		+	+	+
Private enterprise			+	+	+	+

The semantic broadening processes of the word “xususiy” (private) mentioned above can be explained as follows (Figure 1).



Conclusion: In conclusion, creating a thesaurus for the Uzbek language is not only a theoretical task of linguistics but also an urgent issue in modern computational linguistics (NLP). When developing a thesaurus model, it is



necessary to take into special account the semantic transformations (broadening, narrowing, and gradation of meaning) observed in adjective lexemes. It is important to systematically record in the thesaurus model not only the traditional synonymous and antonymic relations of adjectives, but also the connotative meaning extensions and intensity levels found in lexemes such as "xususiy" ("private") and "oq" ("white").

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