

Structural-Semantic Types of Semantic Field Units "Death" And "Life" In English and Uzbek

Ropiyeva Gulzoda Uralovna

Trainee Teacher, Faculty Of Foreign Languages, Jizzakh State Pedagogical University, Uzbekistan

Received: 29 March 2025; **Accepted:** 25 April 2025; **Published:** 30 May 2025

Abstract: This article examines the structural-semantic types of “life” (hayot) and “death” (o’lim) within English and Uzbek, focusing on how cultural, religious, and social factors influence the relevant lexical items and expressions. It explores various subfields—ranging from basic synonyms to euphemisms and metaphors—to illustrate how speakers of both languages articulate life and death in nuanced ways. The discussion also reveals how Islamic and Christian beliefs, as well as evolving social practices, contribute to the creation of idioms and figurative expressions. By highlighting the overlaps and divergences in these semantic fields, the article underscores the rich interplay between language, worldview, and cultural identity.

Keywords: Life, death, English language, Uzbek language, semantic fields, structure, culture.

Introduction: The notions of “life” and “death” occupy a profound place in virtually every culture, and English and Uzbek are no exception. Linguistic expressions used to denote life (hayot in Uzbek and life in English) and death (o’lim in Uzbek and death in English) extend far beyond literal biological definitions, weaving in cultural beliefs, literary imagery, and religious perspectives. When examining their structural-semantic types within each language, one observes that these concepts are not simply pairs of antonyms, but constitute entire semantic fields composed of varied lexical items, idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and euphemisms. This article explores how, in both English and Uzbek, “life” and “death” are represented through structural-semantic layers, shedding light on how cultural norms, religious traditions, and social attitudes shape the usage of these terms. In doing so, the discussion emphasizes not only the direct synonyms and antonyms, but also the broader constellation of words and phrases that construct the semantic fields in question.

In English, “life” can be expressed through straightforward nouns (life, lifetime) and extended forms that capture duration or quality (existence, survival, longevity). These forms may be subdivided according to their connotations. For example, lifetime signals the entire span of one’s earthly existence,

whereas survival highlights the continuation of existence under challenging circumstances. Similarly, “death” splits into lexical categories like the direct noun (death), its formal synonyms (demise), and a wealth of idiomatic phrases (pass away, depart this life). Structural-semantic groupings also include euphemisms—“kick the bucket,” “meet one’s end,” “breathe one’s last”—which may be less formal or even humorous. Thus, English depicts life and death both in plain and figurative terms, creating an elaborate network of expressions that vary in register, emotional weight, and cultural resonance.

In Uzbek, the central nouns for “life” and “death” (hayot and o’lim) similarly diverge into multiple structural-semantic categories. The term hayot may reference mere physical existence or a fuller moral or spiritual dimension. Other key items, such as umr (lifespan) or yashash (living), highlight either the limited nature of one’s earthly duration or the process of maintaining one’s life. In tandem, synonyms and near-synonyms for o’lim, like vafot (often used more formally or respectfully) and olamdan o’tmoq (literally “to pass from the world”), reflect social, religious, and stylistic nuances. Unlike in English, where pass away is considered a polite term, in Uzbek, formal and informal registers shift significantly depending on whether one uses euphemistic phrases (bizni tark etdi, “left us”) or

straightforward references (o'ldi, "died"). The structural-semantic repertoire in Uzbek often shows a heightened degree of respect or decorum, presumably influenced by traditional, communal norms and Islamic beliefs regarding the sanctity of life and the significance of death.

To examine these structural-semantic types in each language, it proves helpful to categorize them into subfields. First, each language offers neutral or unmarked terms that simply refer to the fact of being alive or deceased. Life in English and hayot in Uzbek function as foundational nodes around which more specific connotations cluster. Death in English and o'lim in Uzbek similarly present core lexical items. These neutral terms often appear in definitional contexts or plain statements. Yet around these neutral terms gather clusters of synonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, and euphemisms. In English, synonyms for life include existence, being, livelihood (though livelihood also implies the means of sustaining life), while Uzbek might supply hayot, umr, yashamoq, each carrying slightly different angles: hayot is existence in its broad sense, umr denotes allotted life span, and yashamoq is the verb "to live." The structural relationships among these synonyms reveal the semantic layering of life as either a general concept, a specified measure, or an ongoing action.

Euphemisms provide a second category. In English, references to death as passing away or meeting one's maker, or comedic idioms like pushing up daisies, reflect cultural inclinations to mitigate the bluntness of death or, in some cases, to inject dark humor. Uzbek language also employs euphemistic expressions, such as vafot etdi (he/she passed away) or olamdan ko'z yumdi (literally "closed eyes to the world"). These forms articulate sensitivity to the emotional weight of the event. Such euphemisms indicate that structural-semantic categories extend well beyond simple synonyms to incorporate figurative modes of expression that reflect politeness, respect, or emotional restraint.

A third type comprises idiomatic and metaphorical expressions. English frequently frames life as a journey: "the journey of life," or "a voyage" rife with experiences. Death can likewise appear as a gateway or threshold: "crossing the great divide" or "the final chapter." In Uzbek, the metaphors attached to life and death sometimes draw from agricultural or pastoral imagery, or from cyclical views of nature. For instance, hayot bahori ("the spring of life") alludes to youth, while hayotning kuz fursati ("the autumn of life") highlights later stages. Similarly, the transitional aspect of death might be phrased as joni uzildi ("his/her soul separated"), evoking the notion of the soul's departure.

These idioms and metaphors thus create a more poetic stratum, revealing the interplay between language, aesthetic tradition, and worldview.

Religious and spiritual subcategories also shape structural-semantic variation in both languages. English, influenced historically by Christianity, may rely on references to Heaven, Hell, or the afterlife in describing death: e.g., "gone to Heaven" or "in a better place." Uzbek, rooted strongly in Islamic tradition, integrates words like oxirat (Hereafter) and jannat (Paradise). These terms add connotations of moral purpose and accountability, bridging the lexical fields of life and death with broader soteriological beliefs. While in English "life" can appear more secular in many contexts, in Uzbek contexts, references to hayot frequently intertwine with destiny or divine ordination, as in Alloh taolo bergan umr ("the life granted by God"). Such expressions highlight the culturally embedded nature of these semantic fields, demonstrating that lexical choices are never purely linguistic but also ideological.

A further dimension emerges in the intersection of the life and death fields with social and communal norms. In English, one may find statements like "Life goes on," capturing resilience after a loss, or "Death leaves a heartache no one can heal," underscoring shared grief. In Uzbek communities, funerals and mourning practices (janoza, taziya) bring to light a communal view of mortality, signified by communal prayers and collective remembrance. The lexical items around death thus extend from naming the event (o'lim) to articulating community responses (taziya bildirmoq, "to offer condolences"). Parallel expressions in English might involve simpler phrases like "send condolences," though cultural practices differ. The structural-semantic networks in each language thus reflect not only individual experiences of life and death but also how entire societies frame these experiences through shared customs and expressions.

Generational and contemporary language use add yet another layer. English, influenced by media and the internet, has seen a rise in casual or novel expressions, such as "I'm dead inside" used hyperbolically to express emotional burnout, or "This gave me life!" to express excitement. Uzbek youth may similarly adopt or invent slang or loanwords when talking about existential topics, blending tradition with modern linguistic developments. While the core items in the semantic fields remain stable—hayot and o'lim or life and death—the ways in which younger speakers expand or stylize these concepts indicate linguistic adaptation. These developments highlight that structural-semantic types are not fixed: they evolve with social context, technology, and cross-cultural communication, further

diversifying the registers and styles in which life and death can be discussed.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the semantic fields of life and death in English and Uzbek exemplify complex, multi-tiered structures shaped by synonyms, antonyms, euphemisms, metaphors, religious idioms, and culturally bound references. A structural-semantic analysis reveals how each language organizes these concepts into overlapping categories, reflecting the interplay of literal, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. In English, one sees a broad tapestry of plain, idiomatic, and euphemistic forms, ranging from the casual to the solemn, while Uzbek likewise exhibits layers that encode various degrees of respect, communal solidarity, and religious interpretation. Investigating these categories provides not only linguistic insight but also an anthropological window into how people conceptualize the journey of life, the finality or transition of death, and the shared cultural values underpinning both. In both languages, life is not merely living nor death merely an end; they are simultaneously biological, emotional, metaphysical, and communal events, articulated through structurally and semantically rich sets of language forms that convey and perpetuate each culture's unique perspective on existence and mortality.

REFERENCES

1. Palmer F. Semantics. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. – 248 p.
2. Wierzbicka A. Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words. – New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. – 328 p.
3. Baker M. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. – 3rd ed. – London: Routledge, 2018. – 368 p.
4. Matyoqubov A. Hayot va o'lim tushunchasining madaniy-lingvistik talqini // O'zbek tili va adabiyoti masalalari. – 2020. – №4. – B. 71–78.
5. Dickins J., Hervey S., Higgins I. Thinking Arabic Translation: A Course in Translation Method. – London: Routledge, 2016. – 296 p.
6. Kamolova M.S. O'zbek matnlarida "o'lim" semantik maydonining ijtimoiy-lingvistik tahlili // Ta'lim va fan. – 2021. – №2. – B. 39–45.
7. Lakoff G., Johnson M. Metaphors We Live By. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. – 242 p.
8. Uralovna R. G. Improving the Mechanisms for Developing the Socio-Cultural Competencies of Future Foreign Language Teachers // Miasto

Przyszłości. – 2022. – C. 137-139.