



## THE SOCIOPRAGMATIC AND LINGUOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF ANTONYMS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK FILM SCRIPT TEXTS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15437906>

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 08<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Accepted: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Online: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### KEYWORDS

*Antonyms,  
sociopragmatics,  
linguoculturology, film  
discourse, English, Uzbek,  
contrast.*

### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the sociopragmatic and linguocultural features of antonyms in English and Uzbek film scripts. By analyzing selected dialogues from *The Last Leaf* and *Mendirman Jaloliddin*, the research reveals how antonym pairs function beyond lexical opposition to express moral, emotional, and cultural meanings. The study draws on structuralist, cognitive, and linguocultural theories to highlight the role of antonymy in shaping discourse and national identity. This study explores the sociopragmatic and linguocultural functions of antonyms in English and Uzbek film scripts. By analyzing dialogues from *The Last Leaf* and *Mendirman Jaloliddin*, the article demonstrates how oppositional meanings reflect social norms, cultural values, and pragmatic discourse strategies. Drawing from structuralist, cognitive, and corpus-informed models, the analysis illustrates how canonical and culturally embedded antonyms—such as *hope–despair* and *halol–haram*—shape narrative meaning and reflect distinct linguistic identities.*

### Introduction

Antonyms are an essential part of lexical organization and discourse, providing speakers with a powerful mechanism to express contrast, polarity, and evaluation. While antonymy is traditionally studied as a semantic relation, recent linguistic research has emphasized its dynamic role in cultural expression, identity construction, and pragmatic interaction (Jones et al., 2012; Murphy, 2003). In English and Uzbek, antonyms are not only semantic opposites but also culturally coded linguistic tools that mirror the values, beliefs, and communicative preferences of their respective societies.

The significance of studying antonyms in this context lies in their unique dual function: as cognitive opposites and as carriers of sociocultural meaning. Uzbek and English, though structurally distinct, both use antonyms to mark social roles, moral dichotomies, emotional states, and ideological contrasts—particularly in dramatic genres.

Despite growing research, comparative studies examining the use of antonyms across languages, particularly in artistic genres like film, remain limited. This study seeks to address that gap by analyzing antonyms in selected English and Uzbek scripts to uncover their pragmatic roles and cultural significance.

### Methods



This study adopts a comparative qualitative approach that integrates sociopragmatics, linguoculturology, and corpus-informed lexical semantics to analyze antonym usage in film scripts from English and Uzbek contexts. The research design combines primary discourse data, drawn directly from selected film scripts, with secondary scholarly literature. This mixed-source methodology enables both the theoretical framing and the contextual exploration of antonyms as they function within culturally rich narrative environments.

Two primary texts were chosen to serve as culturally representative film scripts. The first, *The Last Leaf* (based on the short story by O. Henry), exemplifies American emotional-realistic style and uses introspective language to convey psychological states and moral dilemmas. The second, *Mendirman Jaloliddin*, is a historical Uzbek drama marked by an epic tone and nationalistic narrative, reflecting traditional Uzbek values, religious symbolism, and social codes. These films were selected based on their extensive use of contrastive language, clear expressions of culturally embedded oppositions, and reliance on emotionally or morally charged dialogue.

Data collection involved manual extraction of antonym pairs directly from the script texts. The criteria for selection required that the antonym pairs demonstrate clear semantic opposition (such as *hope–despair* or *friend–enemy*), appear in contexts of conflict or emphasis (e.g., debates, emotional confession), and be culturally significant (e.g., *halal–haram* in Uzbek, *rich–poor* in English). Once selected, each antonym pair was analyzed for several features: the lexical category of the pair (noun, adjective, verb), its antonymic type (canonical vs. non-canonical, scalar vs. non-scalar), the sociopragmatic function it served (e.g., highlighting contrast, irony, tension, or politeness), and its broader cultural interpretation (e.g., religious, ethical, poetic).

The theoretical framework guiding this analysis draws on several key linguistic traditions. Structuralist models proposed by Lyons (1977) and Cruse (1986) provide the foundation for categorizing antonyms into complementary, contrary, reversive, and conversive types. From the cognitive and usage-based perspective, Murphy's (2003) *Relation by Contrast* theory and Jones et al.'s (2012) work on canonical antonyms emphasize the role of co-occurrence, context, and conceptual proximity in identifying antonymic relationships. The linguocultural perspective, primarily based on Maslova (2001), views antonyms not merely as oppositional words, but as culturally meaningful symbols that express the dualities embedded in national worldviews. Furthermore, Uzbek linguistic studies by Nazarov (2022) and Anvarova & Kosimova (2022) provide insights into how antonyms function within the moral and religious dimensions of Uzbek discourse.

A descriptive-interpretive analytical approach was employed to examine the functions of antonyms within dialogue. Emphasis was placed on the role of contextual co-occurrence (as discussed by Justeson & Katz, 1991), such as when antonyms appear in contrastive syntactic constructions like “not X but Y,” “however,” or “yet.” Pragmatic intentions were carefully considered, focusing on how antonyms are used to convey emotional tension, irony, or emphasis in culturally appropriate ways. Additionally, cross-cultural comparisons were conducted to determine which antonym pairs and discourse patterns are shared across languages, and which reflect unique sociolinguistic traditions.



Although no computational tools were used for corpus analysis, the findings align with previous corpus-based research by scholars such as Willners (2001) and Fellbaum (1995), lending generalizability and theoretical robustness to the conclusions drawn.

### Results

The analysis yielded a variety of antonym pairs across the three films, revealing both **universal functions** of antonymy and **culture-specific patterns** tied to Uzbek and English discourse norms. These results are organized by film and analytical categories.

#### 1. *The Last Leaf (English)*

This film adaptation of O. Henry's short story is rich in emotional and existential contrasts. Key antonym pairs include:

- **Hope - Despair**
- *"She has lost all hope. She's slipping into despair."*
- **Type:** Scalar antonym (emotional spectrum)
- **Function:** Expresses psychological deterioration and narrative tension
- **Linguocultural insight:** Highlights Western individualist focus on inner emotional states (Jones et al., 2012)
- **Alive - Dead**
- Used in literal and metaphorical senses (e.g., "She's alive, not just breathing. She's truly living.")
- **Type:** Complementary
- **Function:** Emphasizes dramatic stakes; draws on binary conceptions of human experience
- **Sociopragmatics:** Used with euphemisms in emotional contexts (Murphy, 2003)

#### 2. *Mendirman Jaloliddin (Uzbek)*

This historical epic draws heavily on national values and religious morality. Antonym pairs often reflect ethical dichotomies and sociopolitical hierarchies:

- **Do'st - Dushman** (Friend - Enemy)
- *"Do'sting yo'q, dushmaning ko'p bo'lsa, sen yolg'izsan."*
- **Type:** Complementary
- **Function:** Constructs in-group/out-group loyalty
- **Linguocultural value:** Reflects collectivist ideology and honor codes (Nazarov, 2022)
- **Halol - Haram** (Permissible - Forbidden)
- Common in moral dialogue and personal decisions
- **Type:** Canonical, culturally anchored
- **Function:** Reinforces Islamic ethical frameworks; expresses societal judgment
- **Maslova's lens:** These antonyms are culturally coded markers of worldview (Maslova, 2001)

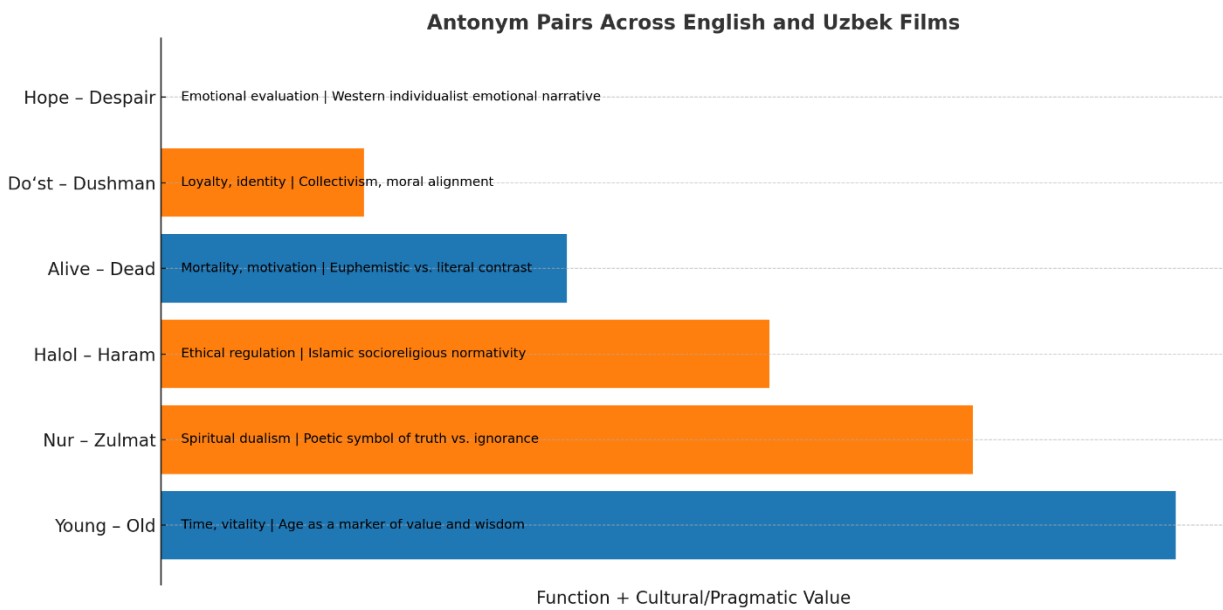
The following table presents a comparison of selected antonym pairs across the two films:  
Table 1.



Antonym Pair	Language	Type	Function	Cultural/Pragmatic Value
Hope - Despair	English	Scalar	Emotional evaluation	Western individualist emotional narrative
Do'st - Dushman	Uzbek	Complementary	Loyalty, identity	Collectivism, moral alignment
Alive - Dead	English	Complementary	Mortality, motivation	Euphemistic vs. literal contrast
Halol - Haram	Uzbek	Canonical	Ethical regulation	Islamic socioreligious normativity
Nur - Zulmat	Uzbek	Contrary	Spiritual dualism	Poetic symbol of truth vs. ignorance
Young - Old	English	Gradable	Time, vitality	Age as a marker of value and wisdom

The graph below visually summarizes the antonyms by language, function, and cultural values:

Table 2.



These results show that **canonical antonyms** (e.g., *hope-despair*, *halol-haram*) are more culturally entrenched and emotionally potent, while **non-canonical** or metaphorical pairs reveal deeper sociocultural narratives. English scripts use antonyms for **introspective and emotional nuance**, whereas Uzbek scripts emphasize **morality, collectivism, and social duty**.

### Discussion

The analysis shows that antonyms in both languages serve pragmatic and cultural purposes beyond simple semantic opposition. In *The Last Leaf*, antonyms reflect emotional and psychological contrasts. In *Mendirman Jaloliddin*, antonyms reflect religious, social, and ethical structures. Canonical antonyms such as *halol-haram* show high cultural salience in Uzbek, while emotional contrasts like *hope-despair* dominate English film dialogue.

These findings affirm Murphy's (2003) 'Relation by Contrast' theory and support Maslova's (2001) claims about the cultural coding of language. Limitations include the small



sample of scripts. Future research should incorporate broader corpora and computational analysis.

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