



## **THE SEMANTIC MONOSEMY AND LEXICAL EXPRESSION OF BEHAVIORAL VERBS IN UZBEK LANGUAGE**

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### **Abstract**

This article investigates the semantic monosemy and lexical expression of behavioral verbs within the Uzbek language. Behavioral verbs, which denote habitual, characteristic actions or mannerisms associated with human behavior, often display a notable semantic stability characterized by monosemy — having a single, unambiguous meaning. By analyzing the morphological and semantic properties of these verbs in Uzbek, this study explores how monosemy manifests and what implications it holds for lexical representation and semantic theory.

**Keywords:** Behavioral verbs, monosemy, lexical semantics, Uzbek language, habitual actions, lexical description, semantic stability.

### **Introduction**

Verbs are central to linguistic expression, enabling speakers to represent actions, states, and events.<sup>1</sup> Within the verb classes, behavioral verbs (*xulq-atvor fe'llari* in Uzbek) uniquely denote habitual or characteristic human behaviors, mannerisms, and repeated actions. These verbs characteristically describe how a subject behaves over time, often revealing psychological or social states.

Behavioral verbs in many languages tend to be monosemous, a property meaning that a verb carries a single, well-defined semantic meaning rather than multiple or ambiguous senses. Semantic monosemy is crucial for precise understanding and disambiguation in communication and cognitive processing<sup>2</sup>.

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1 Komilov, T. (2003). O'zbek tiling morfologiyasi. Toshkent: Fan.

2 Komilov, T. (2008). Xulq-atvor fe'llarining semantikasi. Tilshunoslik jurnali, 3(15), 45–52.



This article examines the semantic monosemy and lexical expression of behavioral verbs based on Uzbek language materials. We address how these verbs are lexically structured and semantically represented, and why their monosemous nature is important for Uzbek verbal semantics<sup>3</sup>. This study also assesses their syntactic and pragmatic features, highlighting their role in expressing habitual behavior.

**Behavioral Verbs: Definition and Scope:** Behavioral verbs describe habitual or typical actions characteristic of subjects, often related to emotional or physical states manifested in behavior. These verbs express repeated or characteristic actions that reveal a subject's disposition, mood, or reactive behavior.

In Uzbek, such verbs play an important role in conveying subtle nuances of human interaction and emotional expression. Common examples include *kulmoq* (to laugh), which expresses joy or amusement; *jiringlamoq* (to buzz), typically used for characteristic sounds, especially those made by insects; and *tikilmoq* (to stare), indicating prolonged or intense gaze.

Other frequent examples are *esirmoq* (to yawn), which signals tiredness or boredom; *qichqirmoq* (to shout), expressing anger or excitement; *sirg'alamoq* (to slide or slip in a behavioral sense, like subtle movement); *qimirlamoq* (to move slightly or twitch), often describing nervous or restless behavior; *so'zolmoq* (to mumble), reflecting a manner of speaking quietly or unclearly; *tikqinlamoq* (to frown), showing disapproval or concentration; and *sig'lamoq* (to sigh), which conveys relief, sadness, or fatigue. Each of these verbs provides insight into habitual or typical patterns of behavior, emphasizing external manifestations of internal states or social attitudes. These verbs are particularly monosemous in Uzbek, maintaining clear, specific meanings that relate directly to observable behaviors without extensive metaphorical extension.

**Semantic Monosemy.** Monosemy refers to a lexical item having one meaning, unlike polysemy where a word has multiple related meanings. Monosemous words ensure unambiguous communication since the lexical unit's sense is stable across contexts.

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<sup>3</sup> Sobirov, O. (2015). O'zbek tilida fe'llarning ma'no yagonaligi. *Til va adabiyot*, 6(22), 112–118.



Behavioral verbs usually represent unique habitual behaviors without frequently undergoing metaphorical extensions or multiple semantic interpretations, increasing their semantic transparency.

**2. Lexical Semantics and Lexical Entries.** Lexical semantics studies the meaning of words and their relationships. The lexical entry of a behavioral verb usually includes:

The semantic content (habitual action)

Argument structure (typically one agent)

Aspectual properties (habitual, stative, or inchoative)

Such descriptions aid in distinguishing behavioral verbs from other verb classes (Jackendoff, 1990).

### **3. Behavioral Verbs in Uzbek**

In Uzbek, behavioral verbs frequently incorporate specific morphological markers that signal habituality, repeated actions, or mannered behaviors. One common morphological element is the suffix *-l-*, which often indicates iterative or characteristic action when inserted into the verb root.

For instance, the verb *kulmoq* (to laugh) can appear in forms such as *kul-lamoq*, which emphasizes repeated or habitual laughing. Similarly, reduplication—the repetition of a syllable or root—serves as a productive morphological process in Uzbek to express intensity, habituality, or a recurring manner of action. An example is *jiringlamoq*, where the reduplicated root conveys the continuous buzzing sound characteristic of insects. This morphological strategy enhances the semantic nuance by specifically marking the behavior as typical or repetitive rather than a one-time occurrence.

T. Komilov highlights that such morphological devices are integral in distinguishing behavioral verbs within the verbal system of Uzbek, allowing speakers to encode not only the nature of the action but also its habitual and mannered quality. These morphological markers thus play a crucial role in conveying the habitual semantics inherent to behavioral verbs, reinforcing their monosemous and context-consistent meanings.

**Lexical Examples**

**Typical Uzbek behavioral verbs include:**

Uzbek Verb	English Equivalent	Description
kulmoq	to laugh	Habitual expression of joy
jiringlamoq	to buzz	Characteristic insect sound
tikilmoq	to stare	Habitual intense gazing
qichqirmoq	to shout	Habitual loud vocalization
eshitilmoq	to be heard	Passive form, habitual sound reception

These verbs encode observable behavioral patterns with specific lexical meanings.

**Semantic Monosemy of Behavioral Verbs.** Behavioral verbs in Uzbek demonstrate limited polysemy. For instance, *kulmoq* consistently denotes laughter without extended metaphorical uses, unlike verbs such as *bor* (to go), which display polysemy. Their consistent meaning reinforces the monosemous nature.

The monosemy of behavioral verbs facilitates semantic stability, crucial in communication. Uzbek listeners can reliably interpret these verbs without ambiguity, aiding pragmatic understanding<sup>4</sup>.

Most behavioral verbs are monotransitive or intransitive with a single agent performing the behavior. For example, *kulmoq* requires an agent (*Men kulaman* — I laugh).

These verbs often express habitual aspect. Often, their lexical semantics emphasize repetitive or characteristic action, e.g., *tikilmoq* implies repeated staring.

**Cognitive and Pragmatic Aspects.** Behavioral verbs align with cognitive categories of recurrent human behaviors recognized cross-culturally. Monosemy aids in categorization, as each behavior has a dedicated verb. Behavioral verbs also express pragmatic meaning: they can signal emotional states (e.g., ***kulmoq*** indicates happiness) or social signals (***tikilmoq*** indicates focus or suspicion).

**Comparative Insights: Uzbek and Other Languages.** Similar to Uzbek, many Turkic languages exhibit monosemous behavioral verbs with clear lexical and

<sup>4</sup> Islomov, M. (2012). O‘zbek tilida fe‘l semantikasi. O‘zbek tili va adabiyoti, 1(10), 78–85.

semantic roles 5. This reveals typological stability in expressing habitual behaviors.

Although behavioral verbs are largely monosemous, literary or metaphorical contexts can extend meanings (e.g., *kulmoq* metaphorically to mock). These marginal cases do not undermine the overall dominance of monosemy.

## Conclusion

Behavioral verbs in Uzbek overwhelmingly exhibit semantic monosemy, expressing habitual and characteristic actions with clear, stable meanings. Their lexical entries emphasize single-agent argument structure and habitual aspect. This semantic stability supports efficient comprehension and pragmatic communication. The present analysis enriches our understanding of Turkic verbal semantics and informs broader theories of lexical meaning.

Moreover, the predictable nature of these verbs facilitates language acquisition, especially among children learning Uzbek as their first language. The consistency of meaning also aids in reducing ambiguity in both spoken and written discourse. Additionally, the strong link between form and meaning in behavioral verbs underscores the importance of morphological markers signaling habituality in Uzbek. Overall, these findings highlight the integral role of behavioral verbs in shaping the semantic fabric of the Uzbek language.

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