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## Контекстуальная модуляция лексико-семантических особенностей в английском и узбекском правовом дискурсе

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В данной статье исследуется контекстуальная модуляция лексико-семантических особенностей в английском и узбекском правовом дискурсе, с акцентом на то, как юридические термины меняют свое значение в судебном, законодательном и доктринальном контекстах. С помощью сравнительного структурного и семантического анализа исследование выявляет закономерности полисемии, терминологической вариативности и прагматической переинтерпретации. Результаты показывают межъязыковые асимметрии в семантическом объеме и функциональной нагрузке, подчеркивая последствия для юридического перевода, гармонизации и практики двуязычного составления документов.

**Ключевые слова:** правовой дискурс, контекстуальная модуляция, полисемия, синонимия, семантическая вариативность.

### Introduction

The study of lexico-semantic features in legal language has increasingly attracted scholarly attention due to the intricate relationship between legal terminology and precise communication. Legal terms are not merely labels for concepts; they carry nuanced meanings that are shaped by historical, institutional, and procedural contexts. Unlike general language, the vocabulary of law is governed by norms of precision, clarity, and unambiguity, yet it simultaneously exhibits flexibility to accommodate interpretative needs. The lexicon of legal discourse often reflects complex semantic networks, including polysemy, synonymy, and hierarchical relationships, which interact with contextual factors to influence legal reasoning and decision-making. Understanding these features is crucial not only for linguists but also for legal practitioners, translators, and policymakers who operate in multilingual or cross-jurisdictional environments.

Context plays a pivotal role in shaping the meaning of legal terms, particularly within judicial discourse. The interpretation of a term can vary depending on its syntactic environment, the communicative purpose of the utterance, and the legal framework within which

it is used. Judicial texts, including court opinions, procedural documents, and legislative references, reveal that terms often undergo semantic modulation in response to specific case facts, evidential requirements, or argumentative strategies. Such contextual modulation ensures that legal communication remains functional and adaptable, while still preserving the clarity necessary for authoritative decision-making. Comparative analysis between English and Uzbek judicial texts demonstrates that semantic flexibility interacts with linguistic and cultural conventions, further complicating the understanding and translation of legal terminology.

This study aims to explore the mechanisms through which context modulates the lexico-semantic features of legal terms in judicial discourse. By employing a corpus-based and comparative methodology, it seeks to identify patterns of semantic variation, including polysemy, synonymy, semantic narrowing, and broadening, as well as the roles of collocations and lexical frequency. The research is significant in highlighting the dynamic interplay between lexical meaning and contextual application, providing insights for legal linguistics, translation studies, and bilingual legal drafting. The primary questions guiding this research focus on how judicial context influences the semantic interpretation of legal terms, what patterns of lexical and semantic flexibility emerge in English and Uzbek legal texts, and how such modulation affects legal clarity and consistency. Addressing these questions contributes to a deeper understanding of the functional and cognitive dimensions of legal language, and it offers practical implications for improving precision and comprehension in multilingual judicial contexts.

### **Literature Review**

Research on legal terminology has progressed from descriptive accounts of legal lexis to sophisticated analyses of semantic variation and context-dependent meaning. Early linguistic frameworks recognize legal language as a specialized register with distinct lexical properties that influence interpretation and application [34]. Within legal linguistics, scholars like Bhatia [6] propose functional categorization of legal texts to uncover how lexical and semantic patterns vary across judicial opinions, statutes, and other legal genres, emphasizing that meaning in legal contexts is not static but modulated by communicative purposes and institutional norms.

More recent studies foreground the lexico-semantic features that characterize legal terminology in comparative contexts. Jumabayeva [18] explores how semantic nuances, contextual usage, and translation challenges shape the meaning of legal terms in English and Uzbek, highlighting the complexity that arises when terms lack direct cross-linguistic equivalence. Similarly, Xasanbayeva and Mannonova [23; 38] examine polysemy, synonymy, and borrowings in English and Uzbek legal lexis, noting that lexical and semantic features are shaped by historical influences as well as by differing legal traditions.

Cross-linguistic research also identifies systematic differences in terminological structures. Khujakulov [20] argues that English legal vocabulary, rooted in common law, and Uzbek legal terminology, emerging from civil law traditions, reflect divergent semantic hierarchies and conceptual mappings, which complicate direct equivalence in bilingual legal communication. Pulatova and colleagues [27] further demonstrate that globalization affects term adaptation and use, with English influence increasing in Uzbek legal practice while sometimes leading to semantic distortions if context is ignored.

Despite these contributions, there remains a gap in systematic analysis of how judicial context actively shapes lexico-semantic meaning within legal discourse itself. Most existing studies focus on term formation, translation equivalence, or structural differences between languages, rather than examining how the situational and argumentative contexts of judicial texts modulate semantic interpretation. This research addresses that gap by combining corpus-based methods and comparative analysis to reveal patterns of semantic variation and contextual modulation that are integral to judicial reasoning and interpretation, thus contributing to legal linguistics, translation studies, and comparative legal communication.

## **Methodology**

The present study employs a corpus-based methodology to examine the contextual modulation of lexico-semantic features in judicial discourse. The research corpus was carefully compiled to ensure representative coverage of both English and Uzbek legal texts. Primary sources include judicial opinions, court transcripts, and statutory documents spanning multiple domains of law, including civil, criminal, and administrative law. English texts were drawn from publicly accessible case law databases, whereas Uzbek texts were sourced from national court reports and legislative repositories. Selection criteria prioritized documents that exemplify formal judicial language, demonstrate a diversity of legal terms, and include sufficient contextual information for semantic analysis.

The analytical framework integrates lexico-semantic, corpus-based, and pragmatic approaches. Lexico-semantic analysis focuses on the meaning, structure, and relational patterns of legal terms, including polysemy, synonymy, and semantic shifts. Corpus-based methods enable systematic extraction, quantification, and comparison of terms across texts, allowing patterns of frequency, collocation, and distribution to be identified. Pragmatic analysis considers the role of context, including the communicative purpose of sentences, argumentative structures, and institutional conventions, in shaping term meaning.

Data coding involved annotating the corpus for lexical items, identifying semantic variants, and tagging instances of polysemy, synonymy, and context-driven semantic narrowing or broadening. Semantic variation was assessed based on definitional consistency, co-occurring terms, and hierarchical relationships within the legal discourse. Cross-linguistic com-

parisons between English and Uzbek texts were conducted to identify divergences in semantic scope and contextual usage, providing insights into the interplay between language, law, and judicial reasoning.

### Analysis and Results

Legal discourse demonstrates that the meaning of legal terms is rarely fixed, but rather dynamically shaped by context. In both English and Uzbek courts, terms such as “*liability*,” “*negligence*,” and “*due process*” acquire nuanced interpretations depending on procedural circumstances, evidentiary requirements, or the legal function they perform within a sentence [1]. For instance, “*assessment*” in legal reasoning may refer to deliberation or evaluative judgment rather than a single definitional sense [2]. In Uzbek legal texts, terms such as “*mas’uliyat*” (liability) and “*vijdonan qaror qabul qilish*” (acting in good conscience) similarly display semantic flexibility, often influenced by statutory context and judicial framing [3]. These examples illustrate how legal interpretation is shaped by situational usage, supporting findings that context modulates semantic meaning in judicial discourse.

Patterns of semantic variation often involve polysemy, synonymy, and semantic narrowing or broadening. Polysemy appears in terms like “*charge*,” which in criminal law can signify a formal accusation, while in administrative contexts it may denote an imposed duty or obligation [4]. In Uzbek, the near-equivalent “*ayblov*” carries related but contextually adjustable meanings [5]. Synonymy also plays a role; for example, “*appeal*” and “*petition*” may be used interchangeably within certain judicial contexts, though procedural distinctions emerge in statutory interpretation [6]. Likewise, Uzbek terms such as “*ijroiya qaror*” (“enforcement order”) and “*majburiy ijro*” (“mandatory execution”) may overlap semantically, yet they differ pragmatically in scope and application [7]. Semantic narrowing occurs when a term like “*interest*” acquires a specialized legal sense – referring to statutory entitlement rather than its ordinary economic meaning – while semantic broadening appears with terms such as “*precedent*,” which can indicate prior decisions or broader judicial guidance [8].

Lexical flexibility is further reinforced by the role of collocations and term frequency. Frequent collocations in English judicial texts, such as “*joint liability*” and “*statutory interpretation*,” signal context-specific meanings and usage patterns [9]. In Uzbek texts, recurring pairings like “*umumiy mas’uliyat*” (“joint liability”) and “*qonuniy talqin*” (“legal interpretation”) anchor terms in predictable semantic frames [10]. Collocation analysis reveals that legal terms rarely occur in isolation; semantic interpretation depends on surrounding lexical items [11]. For instance, “*duty*” in “*duty of care*” differs significantly from its use in “*duty to report*,” yet both are constrained by collocational environment [12]. Similarly, “*majburiyat*” (“duty”) in Uzbek appears with modifiers like “*fuqarolik majburiyati*” (“civil duty”) or “*jamoatchilik oldidagi majburiyat*” (“public duty”), clarifying legal import through context [13].

Comparative observations between English and Uzbek judicial texts highlight both similarities and cross-linguistic divergences. Many English terms have direct Uzbek equivalents; for example, “*liability*” and “*mas’uliyat*,” or “*tort*” and “*shikast yetkazish*” (“infliction of harm”) demonstrate high translational fidelity [14]. However, semantic ranges often differ. The English concept of “*fiduciary arrangement*,” denoting a legal mechanism grounded in delegated confidence and asset management obligations, does not correspond directly to an Uzbek equivalent with an identical doctrinal scope, thereby complicating semantic alignment [15]. Similarly, “*legal detriment*,” understood as a prerequisite element in the formation of binding obligations within English jurisprudence, conveys a more technical and restrictive meaning, whereas the Uzbek expression “*qaror asoslari*” (“grounds of adjudication”) reflects a wider framework of procedural and justificatory reasoning [16]. These differences underscore the necessity of contextual analysis when mapping legal terms across languages.

The interplay between semantic variation and judicial reasoning is evident in how courts utilize flexible terminology to address novel situations. In English texts, “*negligence*” can encompass physical injury, financial loss, or professional misconduct, depending on statutory references and evidentiary standards [17]. In Uzbek, “*beparvolik*” similarly adapts to varied procedural contexts [18]. Judges rely on precedent, statutory definitions, and argumentative framing to modulate meaning, illustrating the pragmatic dimension of legal language. Terms such as “*appeal*”/“*shikoyat*,” “*injunction*”/“*taqiq*,” and “*remedy*”/“*ta’mir lash chorasi*” are interpreted relative to procedural context, demonstrating that lexical flexibility is embedded in institutional norms [18].

Corpus analysis further demonstrates patterns of semantic frequency that reveal normative practices in judicial interpretation. High-frequency terms such as “*due diligence*” and “*remedy*” in English, alongside “*ehtiyot chorasi*” (“precautionary measure”) and “*ta’mir lash chorasi*” (“corrective measure”) in Uzbek, indicate core conceptual priorities in legal reasoning [19]. Less frequent terms like “*quantum meruit*” or “*foydalanish huquqi*” (“right of use”) signal specialized legal constructs requiring contextual interpretation [20]. Collocational networks highlight that the meaning of these terms depends on both immediate lexical surroundings and broader judicial discourse patterns.

Finally, comparative observations suggest that cross-linguistic semantic mapping requires attention to both lexical and pragmatic dimensions. While some terms allow near-direct translation, others necessitate adaptation to reflect doctrinal and procedural differences. For instance, “*injunction*” is broadly understood in English law as a court order to compel or restrain action, whereas Uzbek “*taqiq*” may be interpreted more narrowly [21]. Conversely, “*remedy*” in English can be monetary or corrective, while “*ta’mir lash chorasi*” in Uz-

bek emphasizes corrective action [22]. Such divergences illustrate that contextual modulation is a universal feature of judicial discourse, yet manifests differently depending on linguistic and cultural conventions.

In conclusion, the analysis confirms that legal terms are highly context-sensitive, demonstrating polysemy, synonymy, semantic narrowing and broadening, and frequent collocational dependencies. English and Uzbek judicial texts share structural patterns yet exhibit meaningful cross-linguistic differences that reflect legal traditions, procedural norms, and linguistic constraints. Understanding these patterns enhances the precision of legal interpretation, supports accurate translation, and underscores the centrality of context in shaping the lexico-semantic landscape of judicial discourse.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that judicial discourse exhibits significant contextual modulation, affecting the lexico-semantic properties of legal terminology in both English and Uzbek texts. Terms such as “*statute*,” “*jurisdiction*,” “*settlement*,” “*hearing*,” and “*verdict*” demonstrate flexibility, acquiring distinct meanings depending on procedural, evidentiary, or institutional context [23]. For example, “*settlement*” may denote a negotiated resolution between parties in one case, while in another it may refer to a formal judicial approval of an agreement [24]. Similarly, in Uzbek legal texts, terms such as “*qonun*” (“statute”), “*sud hokimiyati*” (“judicial authority”), and “*ish ko‘rib chiqish*” (“case hearing”) display semantic variation shaped by procedural norms and the specifics of the case [25]. These examples illustrate that understanding legal terminology requires attention to situational factors and not merely dictionary definitions.

Patterns of polysemy and synonymy are evident in judicial discourse. English terms like “*hearing*” can refer to a formal proceeding before a judge or a preliminary session for procedural decisions, while “*session*” may overlap in meaning but carry procedural distinctions [26]. In Uzbek, “*ish ko‘rib chiqish*” can refer to a full trial or to administrative review, depending on the context [27]. Similarly, “*verdict*” may signify the outcome of a trial or a formal judgment within broader proceedings, and in Uzbek, “*qaror*” is adapted to reflect both trial decisions and appellate rulings [28]. Semantic narrowing is evident when a general term such as “*appeal*” acquires a specialized judicial sense, while broadening is observed in terms like “*remedy*,” which can encompass procedural measures, administrative orders, or corrective actions [29].

Collocations play a crucial role in determining meaning. In English texts, phrases such as “*judicial review*,” “*preliminary injunction*,” and “*statutory interpretation*” provide strong semantic cues [30]. In Uzbek, recurring patterns like “*sud nazorati*” (“judicial review”), “*taqiq qo‘yish*” (“restraining order”), and “*qonunni talqin qilish*” (“legal interpretation”) an-

chor meaning in textual and procedural contexts [31]. The dependence on collocations confirms that legal terms rarely function in isolation; their interpretation is shaped by lexical surroundings. For example, “*duty*” in “*duty to notify*” differs from “*duty to comply*,” and in Uzbek, “*majburiyat*” requires specification via modifiers such as “*fuqarolik majburiyati*” (“civil duty”) to clarify procedural scope [32].

Comparative analysis reveals both convergence and divergence between English and Uzbek judicial terminology. Certain terms, such as “*statute*”/“*qonun*,” “*hearing*”/“*ish ko‘rib chiqish*,” and “*verdict*”/“*qaror*,” demonstrate conceptual overlap, facilitating cross-linguistic mapping [33]. However, other terms, such as “*injunction*” and “*taqiq qo‘yish*,” reveal narrower interpretations in Uzbek due to differences in procedural law [34]. Similarly, “*settlement*” in English emphasizes negotiation and formal approval, while in Uzbek, “*kelishuv*” can refer broadly to mutually agreed resolutions without judicial sanction [35]. These divergences underscore the need for context-aware translation and interpretation strategies.

The pragmatic dimension of judicial discourse is highlighted by flexible usage. Terms such as “*jurisdiction*”/“*sud hokimiyati*” and “*remedy*”/“*ta‘mirlash chorasi*” adapt to procedural needs and evidentiary requirements. English terms like “*motion*” can function as a request for action or procedural direction, whereas Uzbek “*ariza*” covers requests for rulings or administrative consideration [36]. Judges rely on precedent, statutory interpretation, and argumentative context to ensure that term meaning aligns with procedural and institutional expectations. Contextual modulation is therefore a key feature of judicial reasoning, guiding the application and interpretation of terminology.

Corpus analysis demonstrates that term frequency and collocational patterns are critical for understanding usage. High-frequency terms such as “*statutory provision*,” “*judicial review*,” and “*hearing*” in English, alongside “*qonuniy norma*” (“statutory provision”), “*sud nazorati*” (“judicial review”), and “*ish ko‘rib chiqish*” (“case hearing”) in Uzbek, highlight recurring conceptual priorities in judicial decision making [37]. Less frequent terms, such as “*preliminary injunction*” or “*foydalanish huquqi*” (“right of use”), signal specialized legal constructs that require careful contextual interpretation [38]. This pattern confirms that semantic meaning is closely tied to both immediate collocational environment and broader procedural frameworks.

The findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they support the view that legal terminology functions as a dynamic system shaped by institutional norms, procedural requirements, and lexical environment. Practically, they highlight the need for context-aware legal translation and interpretation strategies in multilingual jurisdictions. Legal professionals and translators must recognize that terms such as “*settlement*,” “*remedy*,” “*injunction*,” “*hearing*,” and “*verdict*” carry meanings that are modulated by procedural, evidentiary, and cultural contexts [39].

In conclusion, this study confirms that judicial discourse relies heavily on contextual modulation, with terms exhibiting polysemy, synonymy, semantic narrowing and broadening, and collocational dependencies. English and Uzbek judicial texts share structural patterns but display cross-linguistic differences that reflect procedural, doctrinal, and institutional contexts. Understanding these patterns enhances legal interpretation, translation accuracy, and comprehension of lexico-semantic structures in multilingual judicial discourse.

## Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that meaning in judicial texts is highly dependent on context, highlighting the dynamic relationship between language and institutional practice. Across both English and Uzbek corpora, words and expressions do not carry fixed or universal definitions; rather, their interpretation is shaped by procedural circumstances, textual environment, and broader cultural and institutional frameworks. This dynamic interplay between language and context reinforces the importance of considering situational factors when analyzing legal communication. The research confirms that understanding the nuances of professional discourse requires careful attention not only to surface forms but also to patterns of use, frequency, and co-occurrence within texts.

Comparative analysis between English and Uzbek sources reveals both shared structural patterns and notable differences in the ways meaning is conveyed. While certain expressions correspond closely in both languages, others diverge due to differences in procedural norms, institutional traditions, and cultural conventions. These variations demonstrate that cross-linguistic analysis cannot rely solely on literal equivalence; instead, it must account for the ways in which communicative practices influence interpretation. Contextual awareness is therefore essential for effective cross-cultural understanding, translation, and interpretation, particularly in professional and institutional settings where precision is critical.

The study also emphasizes the significance of frequency and co-occurrence in shaping meaning. High-frequency expressions tend to develop conventionalized interpretations that guide understanding across cases, whereas less common expressions are often contextually determined and require greater interpretive effort. This observation underscores the importance of corpus-based approaches in identifying semantic patterns and understanding how meaning emerges from usage rather than from static definitions. In addition, the research highlights the role of pragmatic factors, demonstrating that how language is used in practice – through positioning, sequencing, and interaction with surrounding expressions – can alter interpretation in subtle but significant ways.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to an understanding of professional discourse as a flexible, adaptive system. Language in institutional contexts functions not merely as a set of static units but as a network of interdependent forms whose meaning is continuously negotiated. This perspective has implications for studies of multilingual

communication, terminology research, and discourse analysis more broadly, offering a framework for examining how specialized discourse operates across languages and contexts.

In practical terms, the results suggest that practitioners, translators, and researchers must adopt strategies that account for contextual variability. Reliance on dictionary definitions or one-to-one translation may fail to capture essential nuances, potentially leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Instead, careful analysis of usage patterns, textual environment, and situational factors is required to ensure accurate comprehension and communication. This approach is particularly relevant in multilingual settings, where differences in linguistic and procedural conventions may amplify the potential for misalignment.

Finally, the study points to the need for further research into the ways context shapes meaning in professional and institutional texts. Future studies could expand the range of sources, include additional languages, or explore diachronic changes in usage. Investigating the interaction between semantic flexibility, pragmatic constraints, and cross-linguistic transfer would deepen our understanding of how specialized discourse functions in diverse settings. By focusing on the interplay between language and context, such research can contribute to more effective communication, translation, and comprehension in professional and institutional environments.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that meaning in professional discourse is inherently dynamic and context-sensitive. Cross-linguistic analysis reveals both convergences and divergences that reflect institutional norms and cultural conventions. Frequency, co-occurrence, and pragmatic factors play essential roles in shaping interpretation, and awareness of these factors is critical for accurate understanding and communication. By highlighting the adaptive, negotiable nature of meaning in specialized texts, the research contributes to theoretical knowledge, methodological approaches, and practical strategies for navigating professional discourse in multilingual and multicultural settings.

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## Contextual modulation of lexico-semantic features in English and Uzbek legal discourse

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This article examines the contextual modulation of lexico-semantic features in English and Uzbek legal discourse, focusing on how legal terms shift in meaning across judicial, legislative, and doctrinal contexts. Through comparative structural and semantic analysis, the study identifies patterns of polysemy, terminological variation, and pragmatic reinterpretation. The findings reveal cross-linguistic asymmetries in semantic scope and functional load, highlighting implications for legal translation, harmonization, and bilingual drafting practices.

**Keywords:** legal discourse, contextual modulation, polysemy, synonymy, semantic variation.