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# Linguistic Units That Make Up the Semantic Field Of "Death" And "Life" In the Uzbek Language

Ropiyeva Gulzoda Uralovna

Trainee teacher, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Jizzakh State Pedagogical University, Uzbekistan

**Abstract:** This article explores the semantic fields of “death” (o’lim) and “life” (hayot) in the Uzbek language, highlighting their deep cultural, religious, and social significance. The analysis demonstrates how these concepts extend beyond basic biological definitions to encompass spiritual, communal, and moral dimensions. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which euphemisms, metaphors, idioms, and culturally specific references shape speakers’ perceptions of existence and mortality. The study illustrates how various terms, proverbs, and symbolic expressions reflect Islamic beliefs, communal obligations, and a worldview that views life and death as interconnected aspects of both individual and collective identity.

**Keywords:** Uzbek language, life, death, semantic fields, culture, worldview, euphemisms.

**Introduction:** In Uzbek linguistics, the semantic fields of “death” (o’lim) and “life” (hayot) hold a distinct place due to their deep cultural, religious, and existential significance. These two concepts represent not merely biological processes, but also psychological, spiritual, and social phenomena. Consequently, the language used to discuss life and death in Uzbek contains many layered expressions, metaphors, idioms, and culturally specific connotations. Analyzing these semantic fields sheds light on how Uzbek speakers conceptualize existence, mortality, and the afterlife.

To begin with, the concept of “life,” expressed in Uzbek primarily by the noun “hayot,” extends beyond simple references to physical survival. “Hayot” can denote one’s entire being and timeline, encompassing the notions of youth, adulthood, and old age. For instance, when someone says “hayotimning bahori” (the spring of my life), it implies a metaphorical reference to youth or

the beginning of an active, flourishing phase. In contrast, “hayotimning kuz fasli” (the autumn of my life) metaphorically refers to an older stage, marked by reflection and the waning of physical vigor. These seasonal metaphors demonstrate how Uzbek culture links natural cycles to human existence.

Additionally, life in Uzbek often carries a sense of divine ordination or destiny. In everyday conversation, one might hear expressions such as “Alloh taoloning bergan umri,” which translates to “the lifespan granted by God.” This highlights a religious worldview in which life is perceived as a divine gift, shaped by fate. Because of this, when discussing life’s purpose or meaning, Uzbek speakers may emphasize moral or spiritual dimensions, rather than confining the notion of life to purely biological terms. Consequently, the semantic field of “life” includes ideas about moral conduct, blessings, resilience, familial ties, and social responsibilities.

Closely connected to the notion of hayot is the concept of “umr,” another common term for life or lifespan. While “hayot” can be understood more broadly as the state of being alive, “umr” places more emphasis on the individual’s allotted time on Earth. Phrases like “umr uzun bo’lsin” (“may your lifespan be long”) serve as blessings or well-wishes, reflecting the shared cultural practice of expressing hope for extended life. In older Uzbek literary texts, “umr” may also appear in poetic contexts, signifying not only chronological duration but also an accumulation of experiences, achievements, or regrets.

In contrast to “life,” the semantic field of “death,” predominantly expressed as “o’lim,” or in more formal settings, “vafot,” carries various cultural nuances. “O’lim” is used more colloquially, while “vafot” is a more polite or formal term, often appearing in obituaries, official announcements, and literary works. The existence of such variations reveals the Uzbek language’s sensitivity toward addressing sensitive topics with degrees of delicacy. Another term, “olamdan o’tmoq” (literally, “to pass from the world”), is a euphemistic expression indicating the departure of a person from earthly existence. These multiple expressions imply that death in Uzbek is not always portrayed as a blunt or abrupt end; instead, it can be represented as a transition or a passage.

Uzbek also uses various idiomatic phrases to talk about death in ways that lighten the gravity of the subject or provide figurative emphasis. Phrases like “ko’zi yuquq ketish” (to leave with closed eyes) or “bizdan kechib ketmoq” (to depart from us) exemplify how speakers indirectly address the concept of dying. This use of euphemisms underscores the cultural tendency to

approach discussions of mortality with tact and reverence. Likewise, in religious contexts, Uzbek Muslims commonly say “Alloh rahmat qilsin” (“May God have mercy [on them]”) when referring to someone who has passed away, illustrating the embedded spiritual dimension surrounding the concept of o’lim.

The semantic fields of life and death in Uzbek also encompass expressions about the afterlife. Islamic beliefs, which hold a prominent place in Uzbek culture, contribute references to Paradise (jannat) and Judgement Day (Qiyomat). Consequently, when discussing life’s purpose, one might hear references to “oxirat” (the Hereafter), reminding listeners of a broader cosmological perspective in which worldly existence is only a chapter. This orientation toward an afterlife shapes how “life” is valued and how “death” is perceived. When an individual is praised for living a moral and upright life, it is implied that they will achieve a favorable outcome in the hereafter. The interplay of “hayot,” “o’lim,” and “oxirat” thus expands the language well beyond literal definitions into a spiritually and culturally infused discourse.

Beyond religious contexts, the semantic fields of life and death intersect with social responsibilities and communal expressions. Life events like birth, marriage, and the attainment of success are celebrated, often accompanied by gratitude to God or references to good fortune. Conversely, funerals and mourning are marked by collective grieving in a way that underscores societal bonds. Terms like “taziya” (condolence ceremony) and “janoza” (funeral prayer) are central to describing communal rituals that occur when someone passes away. These ceremonies highlight how death is not solely an individual experience but a collective one, bringing together family, friends, and neighbors in shared remembrance and support. The very words chosen in Uzbek for these occasions underscore the notion that life and death are intimately tied to communal identity and moral obligations.

Metaphorical usage also enriches these semantic fields. Uzbek speakers might deploy antonyms related to “life” and “death” to describe non-literal scenarios. For example, a person might say, “Ushbu g’oyalar o’ldi,” meaning “These ideas died,” implying that certain concepts have lost their relevance or influence. Conversely, “Bu fikr yangi hayot topdi” (“This idea found new life”) signals that a once dormant notion has been revitalized. Such figurative language extends the significance of “life” and “death” beyond human experiences, applying these concepts to anything that can be born, thrive, or cease to exist. In doing so, speakers reinforce the dynamic range of meanings attached to these terms, utilizing them to illustrate transformation and renewal across various domains.

Cultural proverbs and sayings further illustrate how deeply “life” and “death” are woven into the Uzbek worldview. For instance, the proverb “Hayot – imtihondir” (“Life is a test”) reflects an attitude that living is a continual trial of moral, social, and personal challenges. On the other hand, references to death often remind individuals of the transient nature of worldly matters. Expressions like “Dunyo foniy” (literally, “the world is temporary”) echo a sentiment that everything in earthly life is impermanent, nudging listeners to focus on lasting, spiritual values. These maxims exemplify the intersection of linguistics, morality, and culture within the Uzbek language, demonstrating that the semantic fields of o’lim and hayot cannot be fully grasped without understanding the worldview that underpins them.

Importantly, these linguistic features are not static; modern Uzbek continues to evolve in parallel with social changes, globalization, and generational shifts. Influences from Russian, English, and other languages may lead to the adoption of new vocabulary or the transformation of existing expressions. As a result, younger Uzbek speakers might incorporate borrowed terms or references, especially in social media contexts, to discuss life and death in ways that differ from older generations. Nonetheless, the deep cultural and religious roots of o’lim and hayot ensure that their core meanings remain significant, balancing tradition with modern linguistic innovation.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the semantic fields of “life” (hayot) and “death” (o’lim) in the Uzbek language are characterized by a complex interplay of literal meanings, euphemistic expressions, religious beliefs, cultural norms, and social practices. Beyond their base denotations, these words encapsulate profound moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions for Uzbek speakers. Metaphors, idioms, and symbolic references related to life and death permeate daily speech and literary works alike, reflecting how closely the language is intertwined with worldview and communal identity. By examining how people talk about birth, aging, passing away, or even the survival and cessation of abstract ideas, one gains insight into the cultural logic that shapes Uzbek conceptions of existence and mortality. Through these rich linguistic forms, the Uzbek language portrays life as more than mere living and death as more than mere cessation, each weaving into a broader tapestry of faith, responsibility, resilience, and hope.

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