

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STRUCTURAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: PERSPECTIVES FROM MODERN COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

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Abstract:

Comparative linguistics plays a crucial role in identifying similarities and differences across languages in order to explain their structural, semantic, and functional properties. This article investigates selected phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features of English and Uzbek from a comparative perspective. The analysis highlights how typological distinctions—particularly analytic versus agglutinative structures—shape grammatical patterns and meaning formation. Findings reveal that both languages demonstrate unique strategies of word formation, sentence structure, and semantic expression, which have important implications for translation studies and second language acquisition. The study contributes to the broader understanding of cross-linguistic comparison and provides insights for further research in comparative linguistics.

Keywords: Comparative linguistics, English–Uzbek comparison, typology, syntax, morphology, semantics, cross-linguistic analysis.

Introduction

Comparative linguistics examines relationships between languages by analyzing their structural and semantic properties. As global communication increases, comparative studies have gained importance not only in theoretical linguistics but also in translation studies, ESL/EFL methodology, and corpus linguistics. English and Uzbek, belonging to two different language families—Germanic and Turkic—provide an excellent basis for comparison due to their contrasting grammatical and typological features.

This article explores the key differences and similarities between English and Uzbek, focusing on their phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical characteristics. The purpose is to demonstrate how structural differences influence meaning and language use.

Literature Review

Scholars such as Comrie (1989), Campbell (2013), and Haspelmath (2020) emphasize that typology and comparison provide valuable insights into universal properties of languages.

English, as an analytic language, relies heavily on word order and function words, while Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, expresses grammatical relations through extensive suffixation (Johanson & Csató, 2021).

Cross-linguistic research shows that syntactic patterns in Germanic and Turkic languages differ significantly (Payne, 2010). For example, English follows a fixed SVO word order, whereas Uzbek allows flexible structures such as SOV, SVO, and OSV depending on pragmatic emphasis.

Additionally, semantic studies (Apresyan, 2000) indicate that lexical meaning formation in Uzbek is closely tied to morphological processes, while English often relies on phrasal combinations.

These findings form the basis for the comparative analysis presented in this article.

Methodology

The study employs qualitative comparative analysis. Descriptive, typological, and structural methods are used to examine similarities and differences between English and Uzbek. Examples from both languages are compared at multiple linguistic levels:

- phonology (vowel harmony vs reduction),
- morphology (suffixation vs analytic forms),
- syntax (word order, tense, voice),
- semantics (polysemy, idioms).

Data are taken from academic grammar books, bilingual dictionaries, and existing linguistic studies.

Analysis and Discussion

Phonological Comparison

English phonology is characterized by complex vowel systems and widespread vowel reduction (e.g., *about* → /ə'baʊt/). Uzbek, on the other hand, has a simpler vowel inventory and does not feature vowel reduction.

A key difference is vowel harmony in Uzbek (*kitoblar*, *o'quvchi-lar*), which has no equivalent in English. English relies more on consonant clusters (*strengths*), whereas Uzbek avoids such clusters.

Morphological Differences

English morphology is largely analytic, using auxiliary verbs and fixed word order to express grammatical relations (*will go*, *has written*, *is reading*).

Uzbek morphology is agglutinative:

- *bor-adi* (he goes),
- *bor-moqchi* (want to go),
- *bor-gan-edim* (I had gone).

Each suffix adds one grammatical meaning, and the boundaries between morphemes remain clear. English relies heavily on function words (**of, to, for, with**), while Uzbek conveys similar relations through case markers (**-ni, -ga, -da, -dan**).

Syntactic Comparison

English: fixed SVO

- *The student wrote the essay.*

Uzbek: typically SOV

- *Talaba insho-ni yoz-di.*

However, Uzbek allows word order variation to express pragmatic emphasis:

- *Inshoni talaba yozdi* (object-fronting)
- *Yozdi talaba inshoni* (rare, focus-shift)

English passive voice is formed analytically (*The book was written*), while Uzbek uses the reflexive/passive suffix **-il/-in** (*kitob yoz-il-di*). English relies on articles (*a, an, the*), which Uzbek lacks.

Lexical and Semantic Comparison

English vocabulary is dominated by Germanic and Romance elements. Many words are polysemous (*run—18+meanings*). Uzbek forms new meanings through derivation:

- *yur* (to walk) → *yur-ak, yur-uvchi, yur-ish*.

Idiomatic expressions differ culturally:

- English: *break the ice, spill the beans*
- Uzbek: *qayerdan shamol esayotganini bilmoq, ko'ngli to'q.*

Translation requires semantic adaptation rather than literal rendering.

Implications for Linguistics and Teaching

Understanding differences between English and Uzbek is crucial in:

- second language teaching (predicting transfer errors),
- translation (semantic shift and cultural adaptation),
- corpus linguistics (comparing frequency patterns),
- typology (identifying universal vs language-specific features).

For example, Uzbek learners often omit English articles (*I saw cat*), confuse prepositions (*in-on-at*), or apply Uzbek word order directly. Comparative knowledge helps prevent such errors.

Conclusion

Comparative linguistics provides valuable insight into how unrelated languages differ in structure and meaning. The comparison between English and Uzbek shows clear distinctions in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, resulting from their typological characteristics. These differences influence translation, language teaching, and cross-linguistic communication. Future research may focus on corpus-based comparisons, phraseology, or cognitive aspects of bilingualism involving English and Uzbek.

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