Mapping perception across English and Uzbek: lexical construal, semantic extension, and theoretical implications

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Annotation *This article examines perception as a structured linguistic category in English and Uzbek. The aim is to identify which theoretical principles explain how perception verbs are organized, contrasted, and extended beyond literal sensory experience. The material consists of a compact contrastive set of verbs drawn from English usage and Uzbek lexicographic sources. Typological comparison, componential analysis, and contextual interpretation were used. The analysis shows that both languages distinguish central experiential and agentive patterns most clearly in vision and audition, while lower modalities distribute lexical meaning in a less symmetrical way. A second result concerns semantic extension: verbs such as see, hear, ko'rmoq, and eshitmoq regularly move toward understanding, information uptake, stance, and interpersonal management. The article argues that perception in the two languages should be studied through the interaction of bodily grounding, lexical structure, and discourse-based reinterpretation. A limitation is the small data set, so the conclusions are proposed as a theoretical model rather than a frequency map.*

Keywords *Perception, perception verbs, contrastive semantics, English, Uzbek, lexicalization*

Ingliz va o'zbek tillarida persepsiyani xaritalash: leksik konstruksiya, semantik kengayish va nazariy xulosalar

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Annotatsiya *Maqolada persepsiya ingliz va o'zbek tillarida tarkibli lingvistik kategoriya sifatida ko'riladi. Maqsad idrok fe'llari qanday tamoyillar asosida tashkil topishi, o'zaro qarama-qarshi qo'yilishi va bevosita sezgi ma'nosidan tashqariga chiqishini aniqlashdir. Material sifatida ingliz tilidagi qo'llanishlar hamda o'zbek leksikografik manbalaridan olingan ixcham qiyosiy fe'llar majmuasi tanlandi. Tadqiqotda tipologik qiyoslash, komponent tahlil va kontekstual talqin usullari qo'llandi. Tahlil shuni ko'rsatdiki, har ikki tilda tajriba va agentlikka oid asosiy farqlar eng avvalo ko'rish hamda eshitish maydonida ravshan ko'rinadi, pastroq modalliklarda esa ma'no yukining taqsimlanishi uncha simmetrik emas. Ikkinchi natija semantik kengayish bilan bog'liq: see, hear, ko'rmoq va eshitmoq tushunish, axborotni qabul qilish, munosabat bildirish va muloqot boshqaruviga ko'chadi. Maqolada persepsiya tana tajribasi, leksik tuzilish va diskursiv qayta talqin birligi orqali yoritilishi kerakligi asoslanadi.*

Kalit so'zlar *Persepsiya, idrok fe'llari, qiyosiy semantika, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, leksiklashuv*

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Картирование перцепции в английском и узбекском языках: лексическое представление, семантическое расширение и теоретические выводы

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Аннотация *В статье перцепция рассматривается как структурированная лингвистическая категория в английском и узбекском языках. Цель состоит в том, чтобы определить, какие теоретические принципы объясняют организацию, противопоставление и выход глаголов восприятия за пределы буквального сенсорного значения. Материалом послужил компактный сопоставительный набор глаголов из английского употребления и узбекских лексикографических источников. Использованы типологическое сопоставление, компонентный анализ и контекстная интерпретация. Показано, что обе системы наиболее отчетливо различают экспериенциальные и агентные модели в сфере зрения и слуха, тогда как нижние модальности распределяют лексическое значение менее симметрично. Второй результат связан с семантическим расширением: see, hear, ko'rmoq и eshitmoq переходят к значениям понимания, получения информации, оценки и межличностного управления. Делается вывод, что перцепцию следует описывать через взаимодействие телесной основы, лексической структуры и дискурсивной переинтерпретации. Ограничение исследования состоит в небольшом объеме материала.*

Ключевые слова *Перцепция, глаголы восприятия, сопоставительная семантика, английский язык, узбекский язык, лексикализация*

Introduction

Perception looks deceptively simple in ordinary speech. Speakers *see*, *hear*, *feel*, *notice*, and move on. Yet the lexical choices inside this field are rarely innocent. They encode whether the experiencer is active or passive, whether the stimulus is stable or momentary, and whether the utterance still refers to bodily sensing or has already crossed into cognition, stance, or discourse management. That is why perception remains a productive site for theoretical linguistics. It brings semantic structure close to embodied experience without dissolving the role of grammar and context.

The present article focuses on English and Uzbek. The pair is analytically useful because the two languages often converge in the core opposition between experiential and agentive construal, but they do not distribute lexical work in exactly the same way. English tends to preserve short verbal oppositions such as *see/look* and *hear/listen*. Uzbek also distinguishes *ko'rmoq/qaramoq* and *eshitmoq/tinglamoq*, but in lower sensory domains it more often relies on contextual expansion, compound verbal expressions, or wider semantic ranges. The goal here is not to prove that one system is richer than the other. The

goal is narrower and more defensible: to identify which scientific and theoretical principles make the comparison intelligible.

Theoretical coordinates

Three coordinates organize the discussion. The first is typological. Viberg (1984) argued that perception verbs should not be described only by sensory modality; they also differ by situation type, especially activity, experience, and source-based perception. This move matters because a language may lexicalize a modality clearly while leaving construal differences to syntax or context. Recent large-scale evidence confirms that vision is the most likely modality to receive a dedicated lexical verb cross-linguistically, whereas lower senses do not line up neatly with any rigid hierarchy (Norcliffe & Majid, 2024).

The second coordinate is semantic extension. Perception verbs do not stay at the level of pure sensation for long. In many languages, forms meaning *see* drift toward understanding, forms meaning *hear* drift toward receiving information, and forms meaning *feel* spread into emotion, bodily state, or evaluation. San Roque et al. (2018) show that such extensions are not arbitrary ornament. They recur in interaction, where speakers use perception verbs to monitor attention, alignment, and knowledge states. Sweetser (1990) had already shown, in a broader cognitive-semantic frame, that perception provides one of the classic bridges from the external world to mental and discourse domains.

The third coordinate is descriptive adequacy for Uzbek data. Local research on *hissiy-idrok fe'llari* has emphasized that perception verbs in Uzbek form a semantically layered class rather than a loose lexical list (Tilakov, 2022). Lexicographic sources also reveal that Uzbek often distributes perceptual meaning across simple verbs, analytic constructions, and context-sensitive predicates rather than assigning every fine contrast to an isolated simplex item (O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati, 2021; O'zbek tili sinonimlarining izohli lug'ati, 2023). This observation becomes important once English and Uzbek are compared directly.

Material and Procedure

The material for the article is intentionally compact. I compared a working list of twenty-eight predicates: fourteen English items and fourteen Uzbek items covering vision, audition, smell, taste, touch, and internal sensation. The list includes simple verbs and recurrent verbal combinations. Examples were selected not to build a frequency atlas, which would require a larger corpus, but to expose lexical contrasts that recur across descriptive sources and ordinary usage.

Three methods were combined. First, typological comparison was used to separate modality from construal type. Second, componential analysis was used to identify minimal oppositions such as voluntary orientation versus involuntary experience, direct contact versus diffuse sensation, and sensory access versus epistemic inference. Third, contextual interpretation was used whenever a verb crossed from literal perception into extended meaning. This last step is essential. A sentence such as *I see your point* cannot be analysed adequately if the verb is treated as visual experience only.

Modality	English experience	English activity	Uzbek experience	Uzbek activity
Vision	see	look	ko‘rmoq	qaramoq
Audition	hear	listen	eshitmoq	tinglamoq
Smell	smell	sniff	hidni sezmoq / hidi kelmoq	hidlamoq
Taste	taste	taste / try	ta‘mini sezmoq / tatib ko‘rmoq	tatib ko‘rmoq
Touch	feel	touch / handle	sezmoq / tegmoq	ushlamoq / tegib ko‘rmoq

Table 1. *Core construal pairs in English and Uzbek perception verbs*

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1 captures the broadest pattern. Vision and audition provide the cleanest experience-activity split in both languages. English *see* and *hear* normally present perception as reception, while *look* and *listen* foreground orientation and control. Uzbek behaves similarly with *ko‘rmoq/ qaramoq* and *eshitmoq/tinglamoq*. This parallel is not trivial. It shows that the two languages share a central theoretical distinction between sensing something and directing oneself toward it. The field is therefore structured, not accidental.

Once the analysis moves below vision and audition, the symmetry becomes looser. English retains short predicates such as *smell*, *taste*, and *feel*, although each of them is semantically broad. *Smell* may denote either the experience of an odor or the act of smelling deliberately; only context separates the readings. Uzbek can lexicalize some of the same meanings, but it often distributes them differently. A speaker may say *gulning hidi keldi* 'the flower’s smell came' for involuntary olfactory experience and *gulni hidladi* for deliberate smelling. The contrast exists, but the lexical burden is carried by different constructions.

Taste behaves in a similar way. English *taste* can refer to the flavor profile of an object, as in *The soup tastes strange*, or to the act of testing flavor, as in *She tasted the soup*. Uzbek often makes this distinction more explicit through analytic expression: *sho‘rvaning ta‘mi g‘alati* or *sho‘rva g‘alati ta‘m berdi* for perceived flavor, against *sho‘rvani tatib ko‘rdi* for deliberate tasting. The difference is not simply lexical economy. It reflects how each language packages perceptual evidence and participant control.

Touch introduces another complication because bodily contact and inner sensation overlap. English *feel* can denote tactile contact, bodily condition, intuition, or emotion. Uzbek usually separates these zones more visibly: *tegmoq* points toward contact, *sezmoq* toward felt sensation or awareness, and broader interpretations arise from context. This means that a direct dictionary equivalent is often only a first approximation. The researcher has to ask which semantic component is active in the actual clause.

The most revealing data appear when literal perception shifts into non-literal meaning. English *I see* often marks understanding, not eyesight. Uzbek does not usually extend *ko‘rmoq* in exactly the same conversational slot; speakers more naturally choose *tushundim* or a clause with *angladim*. Yet Uzbek still permits broader extensions of *ko‘rmoq* in other environments, especially where experience blends into witnessing, discovering, or evaluating. The semantic path exists in both languages, but its discourse distribution is not identical.

A comparable pattern can be observed with hearing. English *I hear you* may mean

that the speaker has physically heard the utterance, has received the information, or is signalling empathy and acknowledgement. Uzbek *eshitdim* can also move beyond acoustic reception, but its interpersonal use is more constrained and often depends on surrounding pragmatic cues. This matters for translation. A formally accurate equivalent may still miss the speaker's stance if the analyst ignores discourse function.

These examples support a more precise theoretical claim. Perception in English and Uzbek is grounded in bodily modality, but it is organized through construal and then reworked in discourse. In other words, sensory channel alone cannot explain the lexical system. A verb must also be located on at least three dimensions: the degree of agentive control, the type of stimulus access, and the possibility of semantic extension into cognition or interactional management.

There is also a methodological lesson. Researchers sometimes begin with word-to-word equivalence and then explain away the mismatches as cultural residue. That route is too coarse. A better procedure begins with semantic architecture. Once activity, experience, contact, inference, and discourse extension are separated, English and Uzbek stop looking chaotically different. Their contrast becomes patterned. Some meanings cluster around simplex verbs in English, whereas Uzbek more readily spreads them across several verbs or analytic units. The difference is structural, not a failure of lexical precision.

A useful test case is translation under semantic pressure. Consider English *She felt the room grow silent*. A literal Uzbek rendering with only *sezdi* works in some contexts, but in others the translator needs to decide whether the sentence profiles bodily sensation, social atmosphere, or inferred tension. The same sentence may therefore invite *sezdi*, *angladi*, or a more expanded predicate. The difficulty is not noise at the edges of meaning. It is evidence that perception verbs sit at the border between sensation and interpretation.

The comparison also has lexicographic implications. If bilingual description lists a single Uzbek equivalent for *feel*, *see*, or *hear*, the entry becomes deceptively clean. A more adequate description should mark recurrent semantic routes: sensory reception, controlled orientation, cognitive uptake, stance marking, and interpersonal management. Such mapping would help both translators and students, because many errors arise not from grammar but from choosing an equivalent at the wrong level of abstraction.

Another point concerns discourse economy. English conversational routines often recruit perception verbs as compact response markers: *I see*, *I hear you*, *look*, *listen*. Uzbek has parallel resources, but their distribution is not fully isomorphic. Some slots are filled by perception verbs, others by verbs of understanding, particles, or clause-level formulas. This asymmetry explains why direct substitution can sound semantically correct yet pragmatically off-key. The issue belongs to linguistic theory as much as to stylistics.

Taken together, these observations suggest that the scientific study of perception should move along two tracks at once. One track describes lexical oppositions inside each language. The other follows how those oppositions loosen in discourse and are recycled for inference, evaluation, and interaction. Ignoring the first track produces vague semantic commentary; ignoring the second reduces living verbs to dictionary fossils.

A limitation should be stated clearly. The present article does not measure corpus frequency and does not claim to reconstruct the entire history of perceptual polysemy in either language. Its scope is theoretical and contrastive. Even so, the comparison is sufficient to show that the study of perception in English and Uzbek needs a model larger than basic dictionary equivalence.

Conclusion

The comparison allows three conclusions. First, perception in English and Uzbek should be analysed as an internally organized lexical-semantic category rather than as a loose set of sensory verbs. Second, the strongest contrasts do not arise from modality alone but from how each language construes agency, experience, and stimulus access. Third, semantic extension is not a marginal aftereffect. It is part of the category itself, because perception verbs regularly move into understanding, information management, stance, and interaction.

Therefore, the scientific and theoretical foundations of perception in the two languages lie at the intersection of embodied experience, typological organization, and pragmatic reinterpretation. This framework is modest, but it is useful. It explains why some verb pairs correspond closely, why others require analytic paraphrase, and why translation based on dictionary matching alone remains unreliable.

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