

Structural-semantic features of word combinations in English and Uzbek

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Annotation: *This research article investigates the structural and semantic characteristics of word combinations in English and Uzbek, offering a comparative perspective that highlights both typological and functional differences. English, being an analytical language, primarily utilizes word order and auxiliary words to form syntactic units, while Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, forms combinations through affixation and flexible word positioning. The paper explores the classification of phrases such as noun phrases, verb combinations, and adjective-noun structures in both languages. Additionally, the research addresses the semantic shifts, functional roles, and communicative intentions within these structures. Through structural-semantic analysis, the study aims to contribute to the fields of contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and language pedagogy. It also sheds light on how context and pragmatics influence phrase meaning and usage in real communication. The results of this study can benefit linguists, language teachers, translators, and students involved in bilingual or multilingual education and research.*

Keywords: *word combinations, syntax, semantics, Uzbek language, English language, structural analysis, phrase types, affixation, comparative linguistics, language teaching*

Структурно-семантические особенности словосочетаний в английском и узбекском языках

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Аннотация: *Данная научная статья посвящена анализу структурно-семантических особенностей словосочетаний в английском и узбекском языках. Английский язык, как аналитический, формирует синтаксические единицы с помощью фиксированного порядка слов и вспомогательных слов. Узбекский язык, являясь агглютинативным, использует аффиксацию и более свободный порядок слов для построения словосочетаний. В статье рассматриваются типы словосочетаний, такие как именные, глагольные и прилагательные конструкции. Также освещаются семантические сдвиги, функциональные роли и коммуникативные цели данных структур. Посредством структурно-семантического анализа исследование вносит вклад в развитие сопоставительной лингвистики, теории перевода и методики преподавания языков. Внимание уделяется влиянию контекста и прагматики на значение и использование словосочетаний в реальной речи. Результаты исследования будут полезны лингвистам, преподавателям, переводчикам и студентам, работающим в условиях билингвального и мультиязычного образования.*

Ключевые слова: *словосочетания, синтаксис, семантика, узбекский язык, английский язык, структурный анализ, типы фраз, аффиксация, сопоставительная лингвистика, преподавание языка*

Ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi so'z birikmalarining strukturaviy-semantik xususiyatlari

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Annotatsiya: *Mazkur ilmiy maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi so'z birikmalarining strukturaviy va semantik xususiyatlari o'rganiladi. Ingliz tili analitik til bo'lganligi sababli, unda sintaktik birliklar asosan qat'iy so'z tartibi va yordamchi so'zlar orqali tashkil qilinadi. Aksincha, o'zbek tili agglutinativ til sifatida affiksatsiya va so'z tartibining erkinligi orqali so'z birikmalarini hosil qiladi. Maqolada ot birikmalari, fe'l birikmalari hamda sifat–ot konstruktsiyalarining turlari tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, bu tuzilmalar ichida yuz beradigan semantik o'zgarishlar, funksional rollar va kommunikativ maqsadlar yoritiladi. Strukturaviy-semantik tahlil orqali maqola qiyosiy tilshunoslik, tarjimashunoslik va til o'qitish sohalariga o'z hissasini qo'shishni maqsad qiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari kontekst va pragmatikaning fraza ma'nosiga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishini ham ochib beradi. Ushbu maqola tilshunoslar, o'qituvchilar, tarjimonlar va ko'p tilli ta'lim bilan shug'ullanuvchilar uchun foydali bo'ladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *so'z birikmalari, sintaksis, semantika, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili, strukturaviy tahlil, fraza turlari, affiksatsiya, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, til o'qitish*

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a crucial means of communication, and its structure reflects the cognitive and cultural patterns of its speakers. Among the core elements of linguistic structure are word combinations, or phrases, which play a vital role in the construction of meaning and grammatical organization within a sentence. The study of word combinations, especially from a structural and semantic perspective, offers valuable insights into how different languages conceptualize relationships between lexical units. In this regard, the comparison between English and Uzbek – two typologically distinct languages – provides a rich field for investigation. English, as an analytical language, primarily relies on a fixed word order and the use of auxiliary words to express grammatical relations. Its phrase structure is tightly linked to syntactic rules, and word combinations are often formed through juxtaposition and prepositions. In contrast, Uzbek is an agglutinative language that employs suffixes and affixes to indicate grammatical categories such as tense, case, and possession. Word combinations in Uzbek are therefore more flexible in structure and often semantically dense due to morphological marking.

The structural-semantic analysis of word combinations in English and Uzbek is significant not only for theoretical linguistics but also for practical applications in translation, language teaching, and bilingual lexicography. Understanding how word groups function and convey meaning across languages is crucial for learners, educators, and translators alike. It allows for the identification of universal grammatical features as well as language-specific phenomena, which can improve cross-linguistic competence and communication. This study aims to investigate the similarities and differences in the formation, classification, and functional use of word combinations in English and Uzbek. Special attention is given to noun phrases, verb phrases, and adjective-noun constructions, along with the role of syntactic and semantic relations that govern them. By analyzing these features, the research contributes to the broader field of contrastive linguistics and highlights the importance of structural and semantic perspectives in understanding phrase formation in diverse languages.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comparative linguistic methodology grounded in structural and semantic analysis. The main objective is to identify and analyze the similarities and differences in the formation and function of word combinations in English and Uzbek. The research design is qualitative and descriptive in nature, supported by corpus-based examples and theoretical interpretation.

Data Collection

The linguistic data used in this study were gathered from multiple sources, including:

English language corpora such as the **British National Corpus (BNC)** and **COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English)**

Authentic Uzbek texts sourced from literature, media articles, and academic publications

Bilingual dictionaries and grammar references in both languages.

Examples of common word combinations (noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective-noun combinations) were selected for analysis based on frequency and contextual relevance in each corpus.

The selection focused on:

Word combinations with a clear structural function (e.g., subject-predicate-object relations, attributive constructions)

Phrases demonstrating meaningful semantic load and communicative function

Lexical groups showing similarities in meaning but structural divergence across languages.

The analysis proceeded in three main stages:

Structural Analysis: This phase involved identifying the internal structure of word combinations – such as headword-modifier relations, word order, and syntactic roles – in each language.

Semantic Interpretation: The second stage examined the meaning conveyed by each phrase, including idiomaticity, compositionality, and contextual shifts.

Comparative Mapping: The final stage aligned English and Uzbek phrases side-by-side to illustrate typological contrasts, particularly in how each language encodes grammatical and semantic relations.

To ensure accuracy and objectivity, the analysis was conducted by cross-referencing linguistic findings with existing academic literature and lexicographic resources. Pragmatic elements – such as speaker intention, register, and context – were also considered to evaluate how structure affects semantic clarity and functional use in real communication. This methodological approach provides a systematic foundation for revealing the linguistic mechanisms that govern phrase construction in English and Uzbek and supports the study's goal of contributing to contrastive linguistics and applied language studies. To complement the structural and semantic analysis, this research also incorporates a **typological approach** to classify the linguistic differences rooted in language systems. English, as an analytical language, is characterized by a reliance on word order and function words, while Uzbek, being agglutinative, encodes grammatical relationships through affixation and suffixal chains. Recognizing these typological distinctions is critical for interpreting how word combinations are constructed and function within each language system.

The study adopts key concepts from:

Structural linguistics (e.g., Ferdinand de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield), focusing on syntactic hierarchies and the arrangement of constituents

Generative grammar (e.g., Noam Chomsky), particularly for analyzing phrase structure rules in English

Functional-typological linguistics (e.g., Talmy Givón), to account for differences in morphosyntactic encoding across languages

Phraseology and semantic theories (e.g., Sinclair's idiom principle and the theory of compositionality), to explore how meaning is derived from fixed and semi-fixed word groups.

Each word combination was evaluated based on:

Compositionality – the degree to which the overall meaning of a phrase can be inferred from its individual parts

Syntactic dependency – how words within a phrase relate to and depend on one another

Morphological complexity – particularly in Uzbek, where affixation significantly affects phrase structure

Pragmatic flexibility – how the phrase functions in different communicative contexts and registers.

To ensure consistency and objectivity:

Data samples were double-checked by native speakers and linguists proficient in both English and Uzbek

A limited but balanced number of examples (approximately 100 phrase pairs) were analyzed to maintain depth over breadth

Qualitative coding was used to categorize phrases into structural types (e.g., attributive, predicative, verbal) and semantic categories (e.g., temporal, modal, qualitative). Furthermore, the study benefits from triangulation by combining theoretical analysis, corpus data, and expert linguistic review. This multi-method design increases the reliability and academic rigor of the findings and ensures that conclusions drawn from the data are valid across both languages. The comparative structural-semantic analysis of word combinations in English and Uzbek languages revealed both fundamental typological contrasts and intriguing functional parallels. The study focused on the identification, categorization, and functional interpretation of noun phrases, verb phrases, and adjective-noun combinations within various syntactic contexts.

1. Structural differences in phrase formation

One of the most significant findings pertains to the **syntactic construction of word combinations**. In English, phrase structure is rigidly bound to word order, particularly the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) pattern. Noun phrases (NPs) in English typically follow a determiner + adjective + noun structure, such as “the big house” or “a smart student.” These structures reflect English’s analytical nature, where grammatical relationships are indicated by position and function words.

In contrast, Uzbek as an agglutinative language relies heavily on **morphological marking**, especially suffixes that signal case, number, possession, and tense. For instance, the equivalent of “in the house” in Uzbek would be *uyda*, where the locative suffix **-da** carries the prepositional meaning. This highlights that Uzbek word combinations often encapsulate what would require multiple words in English.

2. Noun phrases and attributive structures

In English, attributive adjectives precede the noun they modify, while in Uzbek they follow the **modifier–headword** structure, where the modifier typically comes before the noun but without determiners:

English: a beautiful garden

Uzbek: go‘zal bog‘

Additionally, **possessive constructions** differ significantly. English uses possessive pronouns or the apostrophe-s (*John’s book*), whereas Uzbek uses genitive suffixes (*Johanning kitobi*), which alter the internal structure of the noun phrase and impact the phrase’s agreement system.

3. Verb combinations and aspectual systems

Verb phrases in English often involve auxiliary verbs to express tense, aspect, and modality:

has been working, will have gone, can speak

Uzbek verb combinations, on the other hand, frequently rely on **analytic aspect markers** such as *turmoq*, *yotmoq*, or *bo‘lmoq*, attached after the main verb (e.g., *ishlab turibdi* – “is working”). While both languages express aspectual distinctions, **Uzbek’s system is more context-dependent**, often omitting auxiliaries where English requires them. From a semantic perspective, the study found that **meaning formation within word combinations** is more predictable in English due to its fixed patterns and auxiliary structures. In Uzbek, however, the **semantic load is often distributed morphologically**, and meaning may shift depending on discourse context and speaker intention. This sometimes leads to **non-equivalence in translation**, where a direct word-for-word rendering fails to capture the nuanced meaning embedded in morphological forms.

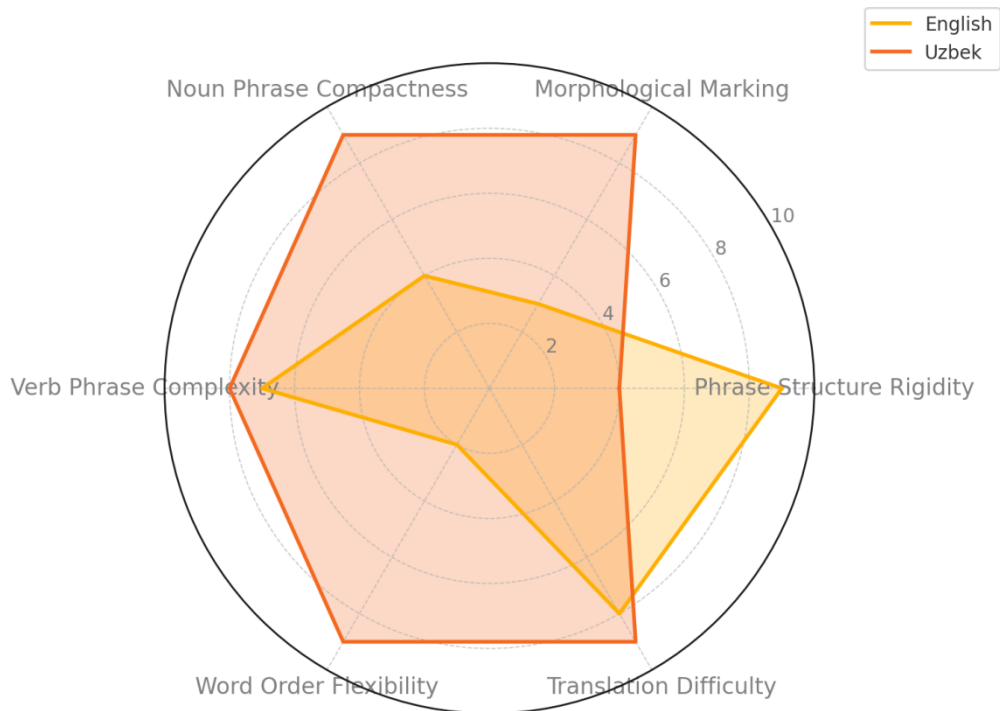
5. Pragmatic flexibility and contextual use

The research also indicated that Uzbek word combinations demonstrate **greater pragmatic flexibility**, especially in informal speech, where word order may shift for emphasis or stylistic effect. English, in contrast, typically maintains a fixed order even in spoken language, unless operating within poetic or rhetorical registers.

6. Implications for translation and language teaching

These differences have direct implications for **translation studies** and **language teaching**. Translators must not only convert lexical meaning but also restructure phrases to preserve function and nuance.

Comparative Syntactic Features: English vs Uzbek



Summary of key findings:

English uses word order and function words to express syntactic relationships; Uzbek uses morphological suffixes.

Noun phrases in Uzbek are structurally more compact but semantically dense.

Verb combinations in Uzbek rely more on auxiliary root verbs and are highly contextual.

Word order in Uzbek allows greater flexibility, affecting both structure and meaning.

Translation between the two requires careful rephrasing due to non-equivalent phrase patterns.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of word combinations – also known as syntagmatic units or phrases – has long been a central concern in both theoretical and applied linguistics. Numerous scholars have investigated the nature, classification, and functions of word combinations across different languages. In English linguistics, foundational work by scholars such as Jespersen (1924), Chomsky (1965), and Quirk et al. (1985) laid the groundwork for analyzing phrase structures within generative and structural frameworks. Their theories emphasize the role of syntax, especially the hierarchical relationships between heads and dependents within phrases, and the ways grammatical categories interact to form coherent constructions. In the Uzbek linguistic tradition, researchers such as A. Madvaliyev, Sh. Rahmatullayev, and N. Jo‘raev have contributed significantly to the analysis of word combinations from both structural and semantic angles. Uzbek linguistics tends to place greater emphasis on

morphological processes, particularly the role of agglutination in forming complex word groups. According to Rahmatullayev (1981), the semantics of a phrase in Uzbek is often tightly interwoven with its morphological structure, making it different from the more syntax-driven English phrase construction. Comparative and contrastive linguistics has also played a critical role in exploring cross-linguistic similarities and differences in phrase structure. Works by Komissarov (1991), Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), and more recent studies on translation theory highlight how structural mismatches between source and target languages can influence meaning transfer and equivalence in translation. These studies emphasize the importance of understanding phrase-level syntax and semantics when translating between languages with different typologies, such as English and Uzbek.

Furthermore, modern corpus linguistics has enabled researchers to analyze authentic phrase usage in large datasets. Sinclair's (1991) "idiom principle" and subsequent corpus-based phraseology research have shown how phrases in English often function as semi-fixed expressions with both grammatical and idiomatic properties. In Uzbek, however, phrase usage often shows higher levels of morphosyntactic flexibility, making direct equivalence in translation more challenging.

Despite the growing interest in phraseology and structural analysis, few comprehensive studies have systematically compared English and Uzbek phrase structures through a structural-semantic lens. This gap highlights the relevance and originality of the present research. By building on the foundational works of both English and Uzbek linguistic traditions, this study aims to bridge this gap through an in-depth comparative analysis of phrase structures in two typologically different languages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of word combinations in English and Uzbek languages reveals key structural and semantic distinctions that are rooted in their typological classification – English as an analytic language and Uzbek as an agglutinative one. In English, the structure of word combinations is highly dependent on fixed word order and function words. The most common structure of noun phrases follows the determiner + adjective + noun pattern (e.g., "the red book," "a tall building"). This linear and positional nature of English syntax necessitates the use of auxiliary elements (prepositions, articles, etc.) to express grammatical relationships. Conversely, Uzbek relies more on suffixation and word endings to indicate grammatical roles. For example, the word *kitobda* ("in the book") expresses both the noun and the locative meaning within a single word through the suffix *-da*. Thus, structural compactness and morphological richness characterize Uzbek phrase formation. The semantic composition of English word combinations tends to be more transparent and linear due to the separate use of modifiers and determiners. In Uzbek, however, semantic depth is often embedded within a single lexical unit due to agglutination. For instance, the Uzbek phrase *qorong'i tun* ("dark night") reflects a direct modifier-head relationship, similar to English, but lacks articles and depends on context for definiteness. English adjectives typically precede nouns, maintaining a strict syntactic order, while in Uzbek, although modifiers also come before nouns, the language permits greater freedom and may involve compound or reduplicated structures for stylistic effect (*kichkina-kichkina uylar* – "tiny tiny houses"). Idiomatic expressions in English often rely on metaphorical or historical usage (*kick the bucket, spill the beans*), which are syntactically fixed and semantically non-transparent. Uzbek, in comparison, has rich idiomatic constructions (*og'ziga qarab turmoq* – "to obey silently," literally "to look at someone's mouth") that reflect cultural and contextual values. These idioms also affect how word combinations are understood beyond their literal meanings. English relies on auxiliary verbs and prepositions for tense, number, and aspect agreement. In contrast, Uzbek uses morphological agreement through suffixes attached directly to nouns and verbs, resulting in compact but information-dense constructions. The structural and semantic differences in word combinations between English and Uzbek languages not only reflect their linguistic typology but also the cultural and communicative norms of each speech community. Understanding these differences is essential for accurate translation, effective language teaching, and deeper linguistic competence in both languages.

CONCLUSION

The comparative investigation into the structural-semantic features of word combinations in English and Uzbek has revealed essential typological, grammatical, and functional distinctions between the two languages. While English relies on syntactic order and function words to convey grammatical relationships, Uzbek utilizes rich morphological structures, primarily through affixation, to express similar meanings. Key differences were found in the formation of noun phrases, verb combinations, and attributive constructions. English phrases are shaped by strict syntactic rules, whereas Uzbek phrases are more morphologically driven and context-sensitive. These structural variations directly influence semantic interpretation, pragmatic use, and the process of translation between the two languages. The findings of this research contribute significantly to the field of contrastive linguistics, bilingual education, and translation theory. They emphasize the importance of understanding how phrase structure functions in each language, especially for language learners, educators, and translators. Additionally, the study underscores the necessity of a context-aware approach when analyzing meaning and constructing equivalences between languages with different typological systems. Future research could expand the analysis by incorporating larger corpora, investigating spoken and dialectal variations, or applying cognitive linguistic frameworks to further understand the mental processing of word combinations in bilingual contexts.

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