
The history and formation of compound nouns: a cross-linguistic analysis of English and Uzbek

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Annotation *Compound nouns, one of the most fascinating aspects of linguistic structure, are of great value in the morphological and semantic density of English and Uzbek languages. This article delves into the stylistic aspects of compound nouns in both languages, with special attention to their formation, employment, and cultural associations. In English, compound nouns are normally created by uniting two or more words and producing new lexical items that usually have particular meanings that are not necessarily obvious from their component elements. Stylistically, Uzbek compounds tend to contain cultural values and social ranks, thus they are rich deposits of societal norms. Each of the languages utilizes compound nouns in order to achieve highest expressiveness and precision, but differing from each other in structural arrangement and stylistic use. English compounds reflect a bias towards brevity and originality, whereas Uzbek compounds are driven by understanding and tradition. By scrutinizing parallel texts, literature, and everyday usage, this study reveals the extent to which compound nouns are microcosms of more extensive language and culture evolutions. Understanding these stylistic nuances strengthens cross-linguistic study and motivates more attention to the intricate balance between form and function in language.*

Keywords *Compounding, morphological and structural characteristics, semantic functions, lexicon, linguistic*

История и формирование сложных существительных: анализ английского и узбекского языков

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Аннотация *Сложные существительные, один из самых увлекательных аспектов языковой структуры, имеют большую ценность в морфологической и семантической плотности английского и узбекского языков. В этой статье рассматриваются*

стилистические аспекты сложных существительных в обоих языках, особое внимание уделяется их образованию, использованию и культурным ассоциациям. В английском языке сложные существительные обычно создаются путем объединения двух или более слов и создания новых лексических единиц, которые обычно имеют особые значения, которые не обязательно очевидны из их составляющих элементов. Стилистически узбекские сложные слова, как правило, содержат культурные ценности и социальные ранги, поэтому они являются богатыми хранилищами общественных норм. Каждый из языков использует сложные существительные для достижения наивысшей выразительности и точности, но отличаясь друг от друга структурным расположением и стилистическим использованием. Английские составные слова отражают предвзятость к краткости и оригинальности, тогда как узбекские составные слова движимы пониманием и традицией. Тщательно изучая параллельные тексты, литературу и повседневное использование, это исследование показывает, в какой степени составные существительные являются микрокосмами более обширных языковых и культурных эволюций. Понимание этих стилистических нюансов усиливает кросс-лингвистическое исследование и мотивирует больше внимания к сложному балансу между формой и функцией в языке.

Ключевые слова Составные слова, морфологические и структурные характеристики, семантические функции, лексикон, лингвистические

Murakkab otlarning tarixi va shakllanishi: ingliz va o'zbek tillarining qiyosiy tahlili

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Annotatsiya *Murakkab otlar – til tuzilmasining eng qiziqarli jihatlaridan biri bo'lib, ingliz va o'zbek tillarining morfologik va semantik boyligini belgilovchi muhim unsurlardandir. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi murakkab otlarning uslubiy xususiyatlari, ularning shakllanishi, qo'llanilishi hamda madaniy bog'liqliklariga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Ingliz tilida murakkab otlar odatda ikki yoki undan ortiq so'zning birikmasi orqali hosil qilinadi va bu yangi leksemalar ko'pincha o'z tarkibiy qismlaridan anglashilmaydigan o'ziga xos ma'nolarga ega bo'ladi. O'zbek tilida esa murakkab otlar ko'pincha madaniy qadriyatlar va ijtimoiy martabalarni o'zida mujassam etadi, shu sababli ular jamiyat qoidalari va urf-odatlarining boy manbaidir. Har ikki til ham murakkab otlardan yuqori ifodaviylik va aniqlikka erishish maqsadida foydalanadi, biroq ularning tuzilishi va uslubiy qo'llanilishida farqlar mavjud. Ingliz tilidagi murakkab otlar qisqaligi va*

yangiligi bilan ajralib turadi, o'zbek tilidagi murakkab otlar esa tushunarlilik va an'anaviylik asosida shakllanadi. Parallell matnlar, adabiyot namunalar va og'zaki nutq tahlili asosida tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, murakkab otlar til va madaniyat taraqqiyotining kichik modeli sifatida xizmat qiladi. Ushbu uslubiy tafovutlarni chuqur tushunish tillararo tadqiqotlarni mustahkamlaydi va tilning shakl hamda funksiyasi o'rtasidagi nozik muvozanatga ko'proq e'tibor qaratishga undaydi.

Kalit so'zlar *Murakkab otlar, morfologik va strukturaviy xususiyatlar, semantik funksiyalar, leksik boylik, tilshunoslik*

Introduction

Compound nouns serve as vital linguistic tools in encapsulating complex concepts through the combination of two or more lexemes. As languages evolve, the mechanisms for word formation undergo significant changes, often reflecting cultural, social, and technological shifts. In both English and Uzbek, compound nouns function not only as elements of syntactic economy but also as indicators of linguistic creativity and productivity. However, the ways in which compound nouns are formed, their structural characteristics, and their historical evolution differ considerably between these two languages due to their distinct linguistic lineages – English belonging to the Indo-European family and Uzbek to the Turkic family (Comrie, 1981). The primary aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive cross-linguistic analysis of the history and formation of compound nouns in English and Uzbek. This involves an in-depth exploration of their morphological structures, semantic classifications, and syntactic behaviors. Additionally, this study will assess how socio-cultural and historical factors have influenced the development of compound nouns in both languages. The contrastive nature of this research is significant for both theoretical linguistics and applied fields such as language teaching and translation studies, where understanding the formation of complex lexical

items is crucial (Lieber, 2009). The rationale for choosing English and Uzbek lies in their typological contrast: English is an inflectional and relatively analytic language, while Uzbek is agglutinative and morphologically rich (Johanson, 1998). This contrast allows for a clearer observation of how compounding operates under different morphological and syntactic constraints. Furthermore, both languages have experienced external influences – English through Latin, French, and global contact; Uzbek through Persian, Arabic, and Russian – that have left a mark on their lexicons, particularly in terms of compounding strategies (Rahmatullayev, 2005). The Introduction outlines the purpose and significance of the research, while the Methodology section describes the comparative linguistic framework and data sources used for the analysis. The Results section presents key findings regarding the typological and structural features of compound nouns in both languages. Finally, the Discussion interprets these findings in light of historical linguistics and language contact theory, followed by a Conclusion summarizing the implications of the study for future research and practical application. By exploring how compound nouns have developed and function in English and Uzbek, this study contributes to the broader field of comparative morphology and enhances our understanding of how different linguistic systems

approach the creation of new lexical items. This knowledge can be beneficial for linguists, language learners, translators, and educators alike. Compound nouns represent an essential aspect of the lexicon in many languages, encapsulating cultural and conceptual meanings in concise linguistic forms. In the field of morphology, compound formation is a vital process through which new vocabulary is generated, particularly in the domains of technology, science, and daily communication. English and Uzbek, despite belonging to different language families – Germanic and Turkic respectively – demonstrate the functional value of compound nouns within their grammatical systems. However, their mechanisms of formation, historical development, and structural patterns exhibit distinct features that reflect broader typological differences. The significance of compound nouns in both languages lies in their ability to encapsulate complex ideas succinctly. In English, compound nouns such as “toothbrush,” “software,” or “newspaper” are omnipresent in both formal and informal registers. These constructions, formed by combining two or more lexemes into a single nominal unit, often follow specific patterns such as noun+noun or adjective+noun (Bauer, 2003). The process has been crucial since Old English, where early compounds like *gōdspell* (“good news”) laid the foundation for contemporary practices. Compound nouns, which represent a significant element of word formation across languages, offer insight into the linguistic evolution and cognitive frameworks of speech communities. In both English and Uzbek, compound nouns play a central role in expressing new concepts, technical terms, and abstract ideas. However, the historical trajectory, structural rules, and typological features of compound nouns vary significantly between these two languages due to their genealogical and typological differences. This study seeks to investigate the historical

development and formation patterns of compound nouns in English and Uzbek, highlighting the similarities and differences across these languages. Understanding compound nouns in a cross-linguistic context aids in revealing not only structural mechanisms but also sociocultural influences embedded within language systems.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative and comparative approach to analyze compound nouns in English and Uzbek. The methodological design is grounded in descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, and cross-linguistic comparison, focusing on identifying, categorizing, and interpreting compound noun structures across the two languages. The study does not employ numerical data but instead relies on descriptive evidence drawn from a wide range of linguistic sources, including dictionaries, corpora, academic literature, and historical texts. The English data set was compiled from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2023), the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies, 2008), and selected historical linguistic sources. These sources were chosen for their comprehensive coverage of both contemporary and diachronic developments in the English language. For Uzbek, data were sourced from the *O‘zbek tiling izohli lug‘ati* (2006), contemporary Uzbek linguistic studies, and historical texts reflecting classical and modern Uzbek usage. Additionally, etymological dictionaries and works by Uzbek linguists such as Rahmatullayev (2005) and Jo‘raev (2011) provided valuable insights into the evolution of compound formations.

The analysis focused on the following key aspects:

1. *Structural patterns* – including noun + noun, adjective + noun, verb + noun combinations.
2. *Semantic categories* – such as endocentric vs. exocentric compounds, coordinative vs. subordinative relations.

3. *Morphological integration* – how the components are joined, whether they undergo phonological or morphological changes.
4. *Historical influences* – tracing loanwords and compound patterns borrowed from other languages (Bauer, 1983).

To maintain consistency in analysis, compound nouns were categorized according to standard morphological classification systems. For English, the classifications proposed by Bauer (1983) and Lieber (2009) were used, while for Uzbek, the typologies described by prominent Uzbek linguists served as the basis. Historical development was examined through diachronic analysis, tracing compound noun usage from Old English to Modern English and from Old Turkic to modern literary Uzbek. Particular attention was given to the role of language contact and lexical borrowing in shaping compound formation practices. For instance, many English compound nouns are influenced by Germanic structures, while Uzbek compounds often reflect Persian and Arabic syntactic calques (Johanson & Csató, 1998). The data were organized thematically and analyzed comparatively to identify recurring patterns and key divergences. Case studies were also included to exemplify specific types of compounds and their usage contexts. For example, in English, compounds like “toothbrush” or “blackboard” were analyzed, while in Uzbek, examples such as “temiryo'l” (railway) or “qalamdon” (pencil case) were examined. Linguistic theories relevant to compounding, such as the Lexical Integrity Hypothesis and the Principle of Headedness, were employed to interpret the data (Selkirk, 1982). These theoretical lenses allowed for a deeper understanding of how compound nouns are structured and processed within each language. Ethical considerations were adhered to in sourcing and citing data, ensuring all references align with APA standards. All materials used in the analysis are publicly accessible or

properly attributed, and no personal or sensitive data were involved.

Results

The comparative analysis of compound nouns in English and Uzbek yielded several significant findings related to their formation patterns, historical development, and typological behavior. Despite fundamental differences in linguistic typology – English being an inflectional, primarily analytic language, and Uzbek being an agglutinative, predominantly synthetic one – both languages show a high frequency of compound nouns that serve various communicative and cognitive functions. These results reflect both shared linguistic needs and diverse structural strategies for encoding complex ideas. The most prominent similarity between English and Uzbek compound nouns is their semantic function. In both languages, compounds condense complex notions into concise, lexicalized expressions. For example, the English *schoolteacher* and the Uzbek *maktab o'qituvchisi* both refer to the same concept using a compact noun construction. However, their morpho-syntactic realization differs. In English, the compound is often written as one word or hyphenated, whereas in Uzbek it remains a phrase with genitive or possessive relations (Tojiboyev, 2022). In terms of structural types, English compound nouns most frequently follow the noun+noun pattern (e.g., *snowman*, *football*), though adjective+noun (e.g., *blackboard*) and verb+noun (e.g., *pickpocket*) constructions are also common (Plag, 2003). The head of the compound typically occurs on the right side, indicating a right-headed structure, consistent with the broader syntactic tendencies of English. For example, in *toothbrush*, the head *brush* determines the grammatical category and general meaning of the compound. Uzbek compound nouns, on the other hand, often consist of syntactic constructions such as noun+noun in possessive or genitive form (e.g., *yo'l harakati* – road traffic) or noun+postposition

combinations (e.g., *daraxt tagi* – under the tree). The head typically comes at the end, as is consistent with Uzbek’s right-headed agglutinative structure. However, what distinguishes Uzbek compounds is the frequent involvement of affixes and particles that reflect syntactic relationships, such as the use of possessive suffixes (*kitobxonasi* – his/her library) or grammatical agreement markers (Bozorov, 2021). Another key difference lies in their orthographic representation. English compound nouns are typically categorized into three types based on spelling: closed (e.g., *notebook*), hyphenated (e.g., *mother-in-law*), and open (e.g., *ice cream*). Over time, open and hyphenated forms tend to shift toward closed forms, particularly under the influence of increased lexicalization and frequency of use (Bauer, 2003). Uzbek, however, does not have closed compounds in the same orthographic sense. Compound nouns remain phrasal but grammatically tight, and spacing is always retained between the constituents, reflecting a syntactic rather than lexical compound structure. The historical analysis revealed that English compounds have been productive since Old English, with early examples found in religious and poetic texts (e.g., *heofonrice* – kingdom of heaven). During the Middle English period, compound productivity declined due to the influence of French, but it reemerged in Early Modern English with the revival of native forms and later expanded during the Industrial Revolution with terms like *steam engine* and *railroad* (Plag, 2003). In contrast, Uzbek compound development was closely linked to Arabic and Persian influences, particularly during the Timurid and pre-Soviet periods. Many compounds emerged in scholarly and religious discourse, often following Arabic *izofa* constructions (e.g., *ilm egasi* – owner of knowledge), which were adapted into Uzbek morphological patterns (Suyunova, 2019).

Discussion

The findings from the cross-linguistic analysis of English and Uzbek compound nouns provide a fertile ground for theoretical reflection and typological inference. This section explores the broader linguistic implications of these findings, linking them to established theories in morphology, language typology, and lexical semantics. One of the central insights of this study is that despite vast structural differences, both English and Uzbek utilize compounding as a primary word-formation strategy. This aligns with morphological universals suggesting that compounding is one of the most widespread methods of lexical expansion across human languages (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010). The semantic motivations behind compounding – such as conceptual compression, taxonomic precision, and innovation – are universally shared, even as the grammatical execution differs. English compounds predominantly conform to the right-headed model, a characteristic of many Germanic languages. This right-headedness aligns with the word order of noun phrases in English, where modifiers precede heads (e.g., *red car, kitchen sink*). The placement of the head determines the syntactic and semantic category of the compound, a concept consistent with the headedness principle in syntactic theory (Lieber, 2005). In contrast, Uzbek compounds, while also right-headed, exhibit more flexibility in word order and rely heavily on morphological agreement to signal relationships between components. A particularly notable difference is the role of affixation in Uzbek compound formation. Unlike English, where compound elements remain relatively uninflected and juxtaposed, Uzbek frequently uses suffixes to denote possession, plurality, and other grammatical features within the compound structure. This supports the typological characterization of Uzbek as an agglutinative language, where morphemes are clearly segmentable and each carries distinct

grammatical meaning (Johanson & Csató, 1998). As such, compound noun formation in Uzbek blurs the line between morphology and syntax more than in English. The historical trajectory of compound noun development further reflects each language's interaction with external linguistic and cultural influences. English compounds evolved through a series of contact-induced changes, such as borrowing and calquing from French and Latin. These interactions introduced hybrid forms and complex nominal constructions, particularly in legal, academic, and scientific terminology (Plag, 2003). Uzbek, on the other hand, incorporated Persian and Arabic lexical elements during periods of Islamic influence, often adapting foreign compound structures to fit Turkic morphosyntactic frameworks. This historical layering contributes to the richness and variability of compound forms in both languages. Orthographically, the divergence is significant. English's move toward closed and hyphenated compounds represents a lexicalization process, where frequent use solidifies a compound into a single lexical unit. Uzbek, by contrast, retains phrasal spacing but achieves lexical cohesion through suffixal integration and fixed word order. This reflects deeper orthographic and syntactic differences: English tends toward analytic compounding, while Uzbek demonstrates a more synthetic approach. From a semantic perspective, English compounds frequently become idiomatic or metaphorical over time, moving away from transparent compositional meaning. Phrases like *paper tiger* or *red tape* carry meanings not directly inferable from their components. In contrast, Uzbek compounds largely maintain semantic transparency, even when borrowing modern terms (e.g., *raqamli texnologiya* – digital technology). This indicates a stronger adherence to surface-level compositionality in Uzbek, perhaps influenced by normative linguistic policies aimed at preserving clarity in the national language (Tursunov, 2020). These observations

have practical implications in translation, language teaching, and computational linguistics. In translation, understanding the syntactic and semantic composition of compound nouns is crucial for maintaining equivalence and avoiding ambiguity. In pedagogy, learners of English or Uzbek need explicit instruction on compounding rules, especially since structural and orthographic norms differ sharply. In computational linguistics, compound noun recognition poses distinct challenges in tokenization and part-of-speech tagging due to language-specific variation. Ultimately, the study reveals that while the phenomenon of compounding is universal, its realization is shaped by the unique morphological and syntactic ecology of each language. English and Uzbek offer contrasting yet complementary perspectives on how human languages package information into lexical units, thus enriching our understanding of cross-linguistic morphology.

Conclusion

This study has presented a detailed cross-linguistic analysis of compound nouns in English and Uzbek, focusing on their historical development, structural typologies, and linguistic functions. The findings reinforce the notion that compounding is a universal morphological strategy, albeit one that adapts uniquely to the grammatical, historical, and sociolinguistic context of each language. Through comparative investigation, it becomes evident that while English and Uzbek share semantic motivations for compounding – such as conceptual compression and lexical innovation – their structural mechanisms differ substantially. Historically, both English and Uzbek have experienced significant external influences that shaped the formation and evolution of compound nouns. English underwent lexical enrichment and structural shifts through contact with French, Latin, and Greek, particularly during and after the Norman Conquest. These

influences introduced a wealth of compound nouns into scientific, legal, and academic lexicons (Plag, 2003). Uzbek, conversely, developed its compound structures under the influence of Arabic and Persian, particularly during Islamic cultural expansion. The borrowed syntactic constructions were Turkified through affixation and integration into native agglutinative frameworks (Suyunova, 2019). Structurally, English compound nouns generally exhibit right-headedness and are classified orthographically as closed, hyphenated, or open compounds (Bauer, 2003). The use of compounding in English is flexible and often leads to idiomatic or metaphorical usage over time, a tendency less pronounced in Uzbek. Uzbek compound nouns, while also predominantly right-headed, are characterized by strong syntactic and morphological cohesion, typically through possessive constructions, genitive connectors, and agglutinative suffixation (Bozorov, 2021). This difference reflects the broader typological contrast between the analytic nature of English and the synthetic, agglutinative nature of Uzbek (Johanson & Csató, 1998). Another key distinction lies in the orthographic treatment of

compound nouns. English tends to lexicalize frequently used compounds over time, reducing them to single orthographic units (e.g., *newspaper*, *blackboard*). Uzbek, on the other hand, maintains consistent spacing between compound components, even in highly lexicalized expressions. This suggests that compounding in Uzbek retains a greater syntactic orientation, whereas English leans toward morphological lexicalization (Tojiboyev, 2022). Semantically, compound nouns in both languages fulfill critical cognitive and communicative roles. They allow for compact expression of complex ideas and enable language users to create new terms with relative ease. However, English compounds often evolve into idiomatic expressions (e.g., *red tape*, *paper trail*), diverging from their literal meanings. Uzbek compounds typically remain semantically transparent, emphasizing clarity and functional meaning over idiomatic complexity (Tursunov, 2020). This contrast highlights the influence of cultural and educational norms, particularly in state language policies and linguistic standardization efforts in Uzbekistan.

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