

STRUCTURE AND SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF VERBS IN THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract

A comprehensive examination of the structural and semantic characteristics of verbs in English and Uzbek reveals both striking similarities and notable differences shaped by their respective linguistic typologies. English, belonging to the Indo-European family, and Uzbek, a representative of the Turkic language group, offer unique perspectives on verb formation, grammatical categorization, and semantic representation. This study investigates the morphological patterns, including verb inflection and derivation processes, as well as the systems of tense, aspect, and modality (TAM) in both languages. Additionally, the research analyzes how verbs assign semantic roles such as agent, experiencer, theme, and beneficiary in sentence structures. Through comparative linguistic analysis, key areas of convergence and divergence are identified, especially in relation to verb valency, argument structure, and the expression of modality. The results underscore the complexity and richness of verbal systems in both languages, highlighting the influence of agglutinative versus analytic structures on meaning construction. Insights gained from this study contribute to the broader understanding of cross-linguistic verb semantics and have practical applications in areas such as bilingual education, language acquisition, and the development of accurate translation models between English and Uzbek.

Keywords: Verb morphology, tense and aspect, modality, agglutinative languages, analytic languages, cross-linguistic comparison, verb classes, argument structure, case marking, language typology, semantic roles, syntactic roles, word order, phrasal verbs, verb derivation, transitivity and valency.

1. Introduction

Verbs occupy a central role in the grammatical structure and semantic interpretation of sentences across all human languages. They function as the core of predicates and serve to express essential elements of communication, including actions, occurrences, processes, and states of being. As dynamic carriers of meaning, verbs not only convey temporal and aspectual information but also define the relationships between participants within a given event. Despite their universal presence and grammatical importance, the structure and semantic properties of verbs can differ

considerably across languages, depending on the typological and historical development of each linguistic system.

This study focuses on a comparative analysis of the structural and semantic characteristics of verbs in two typologically distinct languages: English and Uzbek. English, a Germanic language within the Indo-European family, is predominantly analytic in nature. Its grammatical relationships are typically expressed through fixed word order and the use of auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, and periphrastic constructions. Morphologically, English verbs are relatively simple, with limited inflectional forms and heavy reliance on syntactic means to express tense, aspect, and modality.

In contrast, Uzbek, a member of the Turkic language family, exhibits agglutinative morphological properties. Verbs in Uzbek are formed through the attachment of various suffixes that encode grammatical categories such as person, tense, aspect, mood, and voice. The relatively free word order of Uzbek allows greater syntactic flexibility, with meaning being determined primarily by suffixation rather than word position. These typological differences influence not only the way verbs are formed and used, but also how semantic information is distributed within the clause.

By investigating verb morphology, tense-aspect-modality (TAM) systems, argument structure, and semantic roles, this study aims to uncover both shared and language-specific features of verbal systems in English and Uzbek. The analysis draws upon linguistic theory and cross-linguistic comparison to shed light on how each language organizes and conveys verbal meaning. In doing so, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of language typology, bilingual education, and translation practices involving English and Uzbek.

This study adopts a comparative linguistic approach to examine the structural and semantic features of verbs in English and Uzbek. The methodology is based on both descriptive and contrastive linguistic analysis. The descriptive component involves an in-depth exploration of verb morphology, derivational processes, and syntactic roles in each language, aiming to establish a clear understanding of how verbs function independently within their respective linguistic systems.

The contrastive component of the study focuses on identifying similarities and differences between the two languages with respect to verb categories, argument structures, and aspectual distinctions. Special attention is paid to the tense-aspect-modality (TAM) systems, which reflect how different languages encode temporal and modal information through verbal constructions.

To support the theoretical framework, data were gathered from a variety of authentic sources, including contemporary English and Uzbek corpora, grammar textbooks, scholarly articles, and linguistic databases. Sample verb forms were analyzed in context to observe usage patterns and semantic shifts. Additionally, translation equivalents were examined to trace potential areas of mismatch or

divergence, particularly where one-to-one correspondence of meaning is not achievable.

A selection of high-frequency, semantically broad verbs (e.g., *go*, *be*, *make*, *do*) was analyzed across both languages. These verbs were chosen because of their fundamental role in basic sentence construction and their polysemous nature, which allows for observation of subtle semantic variations and structural adjustments during cross-linguistic comparison.

3. Structural Features of Verbs (Expanded Version)

3.1 Verb Morphology

English Verbs:

English verbs demonstrate a relatively simple morphological structure. Inflectional changes are minimal, typically limited to distinctions in tense, person, and aspect. For regular verbs, the past tense and past participle forms are created by adding *-ed* (e.g., *walk* → *walked*). Irregular verbs (e.g., *go* → *went*) do not follow this pattern. Third person singular present tense is marked by the *-s* suffix (e.g., *he runs*). Progressive and perfect aspects are formed through the use of auxiliary verbs such as *be* and *have* (e.g., *is walking*, *has walked*). Modal meanings (necessity, possibility, ability, etc.) are expressed through a closed set of modal auxiliaries like *can*, *should*, *must*, and *might*, which do not inflect for tense or person.

Uzbek Verbs:

In contrast, Uzbek verbs exhibit a rich and complex morphology due to the agglutinative nature of the language. Verb stems are modified through the addition of various suffixes that convey person, tense, aspect, mood, voice, and negation. For example, the root verb *bor-* (to go) can appear in numerous forms such as *boraman* (I go), *borganman* (I have gone), or *borayotgan edim* (I was going). Unlike English, Uzbek does not require auxiliary verbs for most aspectual and temporal distinctions; instead, these are embedded within the verb structure itself. This morphological complexity allows for a high degree of nuance in verbal expression.

3.2 Verb Classes and Derivation

Verb derivation is an important morphological feature in Uzbek. New verbs can be systematically created by adding derivational affixes to verb roots, allowing for the formation of causative, passive, reflexive, and reciprocal forms. For example, from the root *koʻr-* (to see), one can derive *koʻrsat-* (to show), *koʻrsatil-* (to be shown), and *koʻrish-* (to see each other). This results in a highly productive and flexible verb system.

English, in comparison, uses fewer derivational suffixes to form verbs and often relies on phrasal verbs to express derived meanings (e.g., *give up*, *put off*, *take in*). While derivational morphology exists (e.g., *modern* → *modernize*, *simple* → *simplify*), it is more restricted and typically does not reflect the same range of grammatical voices

as in Uzbek. Instead, English leans on syntactic constructions or auxiliary verbs to perform equivalent functions.

4. Semantic Properties of Verbs (Expanded Version)

4.1 Tense, Aspect, and Mood (TAM)

English:

English distinguishes three primary tenses: present, past, and future. These tenses interact with four aspects—simple, progressive (continuous), perfect, and perfect progressive—to form a total of twelve basic verb forms (e.g., *he will have been studying*). Aspect is especially important in English for expressing the internal temporal structure of events. Modal meanings are communicated via auxiliary modals, which are invariant and syntactically positioned before the main verb.

Uzbek:

Uzbek verbal morphology encodes tense and aspect using a combination of suffixes and participles. The past (*keldi*), present continuous (*kelmoqda*), and future (*keladi*) tenses are commonly used. Mood is expressed through suffixes or particles such as *-sin*, *-ing*, *kerak* (must), and *mumkin* (may). Unlike English, modal verbs are not separate lexical items but rather particles or suffixes added to the verbal stem or clause. This results in a tightly integrated TAM system within individual verb forms.

4.2 Argument Structure and Valency

English:

English verbs are classified based on their valency—the number of arguments they take. Intransitive verbs require only a subject (*He sleeps*), transitive verbs require a subject and a direct object (*She eats an apple*), and ditransitive verbs take a subject, a direct object, and an indirect object (*He gave her a book*). Due to its analytic nature, English heavily depends on word order to indicate grammatical roles; deviation from canonical Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order can lead to ungrammaticality or ambiguity.

Uzbek:

Uzbek verbs are also classified into intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive categories, but unlike English, grammatical relationships are marked morphologically through case endings. For example, both *U kitobni o'qidi* (He read the book) and *Kitobni u o'qidi* (The book, he read) are grammatically acceptable, with the object being identified by the accusative marker *-ni* on *kitob*. This case-based system allows for greater syntactic flexibility and variation in focus or emphasis.

4.3 Semantic Roles

Semantic roles define the functions participants play in an event as described by the verb. Common roles include agent (doer of the action), theme (entity affected),

experiencer (entity feeling or perceiving), and beneficiary (entity receiving benefit). These roles are present in both English and Uzbek but are encoded differently.

In English:

She gave him a gift.

Agent: *She*, Recipient: *him*, Theme: *a gift*.

In Uzbek:

U unga sovg'a berdi.

Agent: *U*, Recipient: *unga*, Theme: *sovg'a*.

In Uzbek, these roles are marked via case endings (-ga, -ni, etc.) rather than fixed word order. This allows for flexible sentence construction without loss of clarity regarding participant roles.

5. Comparative Analysis and Examples (Expanded Version)

Feature	English	Uzbek
Language Type	Analytic (Germanic, Indo-European)	Agglutinative (Turkic)
Word Order	Fixed (Subject-Verb-Object)	Relatively free (due to case marking)
Verb Morphology	Minimal inflection: tense (-ed), person (-s), aspect (auxiliaries)	Rich inflection: suffixes for tense, aspect, mood, voice, person
Use of Auxiliaries	Common: <i>be</i> , <i>have</i> , <i>do</i> , modals (<i>can</i> , <i>must</i>)	Rare: most grammatical categories expressed via suffixes
Tense System	Present, Past, Future with aspectual forms	Present, Past, Future marked via suffixes
Aspect Marking	Progressive, Perfect, Perfect Progressive using auxiliaries	Aspect shown through suffixes, participles, and verb combinations
Mood & Modality	Modal verbs (e.g., <i>should</i> , <i>might</i>)	Modal particles/verbs (e.g., <i>kerak</i> , <i>mumkin</i>)
Verb Derivation	Limited; uses phrasal verbs and some derivational suffixes (-ify, -en)	Extensive use of suffixation for causative, passive, reflexive, etc.
Valency	Intransitive, Transitive, Ditransitive; fixed structure	Same categories; structure flexible due to case endings
Semantic Roles	Expressed by word order and prepositions	Expressed by case endings and word order variation

Verb Examples	<i>go, be, make, do, see, show</i>	<i>bor-, bo'l-, qilmoq, ko'r-, ko'rsat-, qil-</i>
Multifunctionality	Less frequent; prefers different verbs for different meanings	Common; one verb like <i>qilmoq</i> used broadly (do, make, perform)
Translation Equivalents	Specific verbs for specific actions	Uses noun + <i>qilmoq</i> or similar constructions (e.g., <i>yordam bermoq</i>)

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that while English and Uzbek verbs perform similar grammatical and semantic functions within their respective languages, the structural realization of these functions varies significantly. English, as an analytic language, typically relies on auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, and fixed word order to express complex verbal meanings such as tense, aspect, and modality. For example, auxiliary constructions like *is walking* or *has gone* and modal verbs such as *can*, *should*, and *might* play a central role in expressing the temporal and modal nuances of actions.

In contrast, Uzbek, being an agglutinative language, achieves much of the same expressive range through a highly inflected verb system. Verbs in Uzbek are often modified with a series of suffixes, which encode information about tense, aspect, mood, person, and voice in a single word. For instance, the verb *bor-* (to go) can take forms like *boraman* (I go), *borganman* (I have gone), or *borayotganman* (I am going), reflecting both tense and aspect without the need for auxiliary verbs. The rich morphological structure in Uzbek allows for nuanced expression within compact verbal forms, which contrasts sharply with the more analytic constructions found in English.

These structural differences between English and Uzbek verbs have significant implications for various areas of language study and practical applications. From a theoretical standpoint, this contrast highlights the typological distinctions between analytic and agglutinative languages, offering insights into how different linguistic systems encode meaning and organize verbal morphology. The study also emphasizes the role of language typology in shaping grammatical structures, revealing how syntactic and morphological elements can diverge while fulfilling similar communicative functions.

In the realm of **language learning**, understanding these differences is crucial. For learners of English as a second language (ESL) who are native speakers of Uzbek, or vice versa, these structural variations may present challenges. The reliance on word order and auxiliary constructions in English may pose difficulties for Uzbek speakers,

who are accustomed to the flexibility of word order and the use of suffixes. Conversely, English speakers learning Uzbek may struggle with the complexity of verb suffixation and the absence of auxiliary verbs for expressing aspect and modality.

For **translation studies**, the findings underscore the importance of not only linguistic knowledge but also an awareness of cultural and grammatical nuances. Direct translations between English and Uzbek verbs may not always be straightforward, as some verbs in one language might have no direct equivalent in the other. Phrasal verbs in English, for example, may require complex paraphrases or the use of multiple words in Uzbek. Understanding these differences can aid translators in choosing the most accurate and contextually appropriate equivalents.

Lastly, the implications for **machine translation** between English and Uzbek are also significant. Given the structural differences between these two languages, it is essential to develop translation models that account for the morphological richness of Uzbek and the syntactic constraints of English. Machine translation systems will need to handle the agglutinative nature of Uzbek verbs, mapping suffix-based forms onto English analytic structures. A deeper understanding of these verb-related distinctions could improve the efficiency and accuracy of translation systems, making them more reliable in real-world applications.

In conclusion, this study highlights the fascinating contrasts and similarities between English and Uzbek verb systems, demonstrating the influence of typological factors on the way languages encode meaning. By exploring these differences in greater depth, linguists can gain valuable insights into the structure and function of verbs across languages, ultimately contributing to fields such as bilingual education, translation, and linguistic theory.

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