

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TENSE-ASPECT SYSTEMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

Sh. Mardonov

*Lecturer at the Senior Department
of the Faculty of Philology, DIEP*

Z. Omonova

*Students of DIEP institute, Faculty of
Philology, Department of Foreign
Languages and Literature, 4th course*

Abstract

The article compares how tense and aspect work in English and Uzbek. The main aim is to explain similarities and differences in a clear and simple way. A contrastive and descriptive method is used. English forms are examined through auxiliary verbs and fixed patterns. Uzbek forms are examined through suffixes, short auxiliary elements, and context. The analysis focuses on simple, progressive, perfect, and earlier-past meanings. Short literary extracts are also used, because real texts show grammar more clearly than isolated examples.

The review section includes both basic grammar studies and recent research. The discussion of extracts from O. Henry, Abdulla Qodiriy, and Xoliyor Safarov shows that English usually builds tense-aspect meaning through separate words such as be and have, while Uzbek often places several meanings inside one verb form through suffixes. The study shows that both languages express completion, duration, and sequence, but the grammatical path is different. English is more segmented. Uzbek is more compact. The article can be useful for students, teachers, and translators.

Keywords: tense, aspect, English, Uzbek, contrastive analysis, verb forms, grammar, translation

Introduction

Tense and aspect are important parts of grammar. Tense shows time. Aspect shows how an action develops, continues, or finishes. English and Uzbek both express such meanings, but the structure is different. English often uses auxiliary verbs and participles. Forms such as reading, writing, and finishing are built through clear patterns. Uzbek usually uses suffixes attached to the verb stem. Forms such as o'qiyapti, keldi, kelgan, and kelgan edi show that much of the meaning is carried inside the verb form itself. Because of that difference, one English form may need several words, while one Uzbek form may be shorter and more compact.

The topic is important for grammar study, translation, and language learning. English perfect and progressive forms often create difficulty for Uzbek-speaking learners. Translation is also not always direct. One Uzbek form may fit more than one English form, and one English form may need more than one Uzbek choice, depending on context.

The aim of the article is to compare the tense-aspect systems of English and Uzbek in a simple and organized way. Attention is given to form, meaning, and function. The article asks several questions: what grammatical tools are used in both languages, where similar meanings can be found, and where big differences appear.

A descriptive and contrastive approach is used. Grammar studies are combined with short text analysis. The article first reviews important research, then explains the method, and finally presents analysis through literary extracts. A clear result is expected from the comparison: both languages express similar semantic ideas, but the two systems organize those ideas in different grammatical ways.

Literature Review

Research on tense and aspect has a strong theoretical base. Bernard Comrie explains aspect as a way of viewing the internal time of a situation (Comrie). That idea is important for the present article because the comparison is not about time labels only. The comparison must also show whether an action is ongoing, completed, repeated, or linked with another event.

A broad overview is given in Robert I. Binnick's volume on tense and aspect, where tense and aspect are studied from morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse (Binnick). Such a broad view is helpful because English-Uzbek comparison also needs more than one angle.

For English grammar, Rodney Huddleston's works are especially useful. In *English Grammar: An Outline*, tense, aspect, and modality are described through form and meaning (Huddleston). A fuller grammar is given later by Huddleston and Pullum (Huddleston and Pullum). Those studies are helpful because English forms are explained not only as school labels, but also as functional structures.

For Uzbek grammar, Andrée F. Sjoberg's *Uzbek Structural Grammar* gives an important structural description of Uzbek morphology and sentence patterns (Sjoberg). Khayrulla Ismatullaev's *Modern Literary Uzbek* is also useful because literary Uzbek forms and their functions are described there (Ismatullaev). Such sources are necessary for a careful comparison with English.

A more focused description appears in Hervé Guérin's *The Uzbek Tense/Aspect/Modality System*. The study shows that Uzbek verbal meaning is built not only around tense, but also around aspect, focus, and modality (Guérin). That point is important because the Uzbek system cannot be reduced to a very short list of simple tense labels.

Recent research also helps the present article. Sharipov and colleagues used a rule-based method for verb detection in Uzbek and reported an F1-score of 0.97 (Sharipov et al.). The goal of that study was computational, but the result is still useful because it shows how central suffixes and morphology are in Uzbek verb analysis.

Two recent contrastive studies are also relevant. Teshaboyeva and Boltaboyeva describe English as more dependent on auxiliary verbs and periphrastic forms, while Uzbek is described as more compact and suffix-based (Teshaboyeva and Boltaboyeva). Sayilova also compares English and Uzbek tense interpretation and shows the value of such a comparison for teaching and translation (Sayilova). Learner problems are discussed by Toshtemirova and co-authors, who connect tense errors with structural differences and weak contextual learning (Toshtemirova et al.).

Another useful direction comes from second language research. Salaberry reviews thirty years of work on the lexical aspect and shows that the aspect remains important in language learning across stages (Salaberry). That point supports the present article because tense comparison should also include event type, duration, and completion.

Overall, earlier studies provide theory, grammar books provide structure, and recent studies provide teaching and translation value. The present article builds on that foundation and adds a simple text-based comparison through literary extracts.

Methodology

The research uses a qualitative method. A descriptive method is used to explain tense and aspect in both languages. A contrastive method is used to compare English and Uzbek forms side by side. A functional method is also used, because grammar forms must be studied in context, not in isolation.

The data set is small but purposeful. English examples are taken from O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi." Uzbek examples are taken from Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar and Xoliyor Safarov's "Ota." Literary texts were chosen because narrative language shows background, sequence, completed action, and ongoing action very clearly.

The analysis follows several steps. First, key forms are identified. In English, simple, progressive, perfect, and past perfect meanings are examined. In Uzbek, forms with -di, -gan, -yap-, and edi are examined. Second, each form is described in terms of meaning. Third, the forms are compared across the two languages. The main question is not only what the form looks like, but also what function the form has in the sentence and in the story.

The study does not use a large corpus or statistical testing. Such a limit is accepted because the goal is a clear and concrete comparison, not measurement of frequency. A focused qualitative approach is the most suitable method for the present article.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis section follows a simple structure: extract, simple analysis, and discussion. The extracts are short because the main goal is a grammar-focused explanation.

1. English extract from O. Henry, “The Gift of the Magi.”

Extract:

“She had put it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food.” (Henry)

Simple analysis:

The verb phrase had put shows past perfect. The form marks an action completed before another past point in the story. A clear sequence is built: first, the money was saved, then the later situation is shown.

Discussion:

English uses had + past participle to mark past-before-past meaning very clearly. Uzbek can express a similar idea through -gan edi or through context plus a past form. The English form is more segmented because the auxiliary and participle are separated. Uzbek often gives the same relation more compactly.

2. English extract from O. Henry, “The Gift of the Magi.”

Extract:

“When the name was placed there, Mr. James Dillingham Young was being paid \$30 a week. Now, when he was being paid only \$20 a week...” (Henry)

Simple analysis:

The phrase was being paid shows past progressive in passive form. The construction gives background information and presents an ongoing situation around a past time.

Discussion:

English can build a very exact meaning through be + being + past participle. Duration and background are both shown. Uzbek can also show ongoing meaning, but the form is usually shorter and more dependent on suffixes and context. The extract shows how English tense-aspect structure can become formally heavy.

3. Uzbek extract from Abdulla Qodiriy, O‘tkan kunlar

Extract:

“Quyosh botqan, tevarakdan shom azoni eshitiladir...” (Qodiriy)

Simple analysis:

The form botqan marks a completed action before the evening scene. The sun has already gone down, and the next scene is built on that background.

Discussion:

The Uzbek extract shows that background time can be expressed through compact verb forms. English would often separate such meanings more clearly by

using forms such as had set or was heard. Uzbek keeps the sentence shorter and relies more on compact verbal meaning.

4. Uzbek extract from Abdulla Qodiriy, O'tkan kunlar

Extract:

“...zeriktirgan edi.” (Qodiriy)

Simple analysis:

The form -gan edi carries a past result or earlier-past meaning. The effect had already appeared before the next step in the story.

Discussion:

A close functional similarity can be seen between Uzbek -gan edi and English past perfect. Still, full equivalence should not be forced. Uzbek -gan forms can carry result, experience, or background meaning, depending on context.

5. Uzbek extract from Xoliyor Safarov, “Ota.”

Extract:

“Ikki ukang shaharda o'qiyapti... nega bu yerda o'tirishlarini endi tushunayapman.” (Safarov)

Simple analysis:

The forms o'qiyapti and tushunayapman show ongoing present meaning. The suffix -yap- is the main marker.

Discussion:

A close parallel can be seen here with English present progressive forms such as are studying. The difference lies in structure. English uses be + verb-ing, while Uzbek places the progressive meaning inside the verb form. Both languages can express ongoing action, but the grammatical path is different.

6. General discussion

The extracts show several clear patterns. English often marks tense-aspect meaning through auxiliaries and participles. Uzbek often uses suffixes and short auxiliaries such as edi. English makes many visible formal distinctions. Uzbek also makes important distinctions, but the system is usually more compact and more dependent on context.

A strong similarity should also be noted. Both languages can express completed action, ongoing process, and earlier-past sequence. Because of that shared semantic ground, translation is possible. The main difficulty appears in the mapping between forms, not in the total absence of corresponding meaning.

The discussion supports one central point: English and Uzbek reach similar communicative goals through different grammatical strategies. English often spreads meaning across several words. Uzbek often gathers meaning inside the verb form and inside context.

Conclusion

The article compared the tense-aspect systems of English and Uzbek through grammar sources, recent studies, and short literary extracts. Several results were reached. Both languages express time, duration, completion, and sequence. However, the grammatical tools are different. English mainly uses auxiliary verbs, participles, and fixed patterns. Uzbek mainly uses suffixes, compact verb forms, short auxiliaries, and context.

The analysis also showed functional similarity between some forms, especially between English progressive meaning and Uzbek -yap- forms, and between English past perfect meaning and Uzbek forms with -gan edi. At the same time, full one-to-one equivalence was not found in every context.

A small novelty of the article lies in the combination of simple grammar explanation, recent research, and literary extracts in one connected discussion. Such a structure can be useful for classroom work, translation practice, and further contrastive study.

In short, English uses a more segmented tense-aspect structure, while Uzbek uses a more compact and layered verbal structure. A clear understanding of that contrast can support better learning, translation, and grammatical analysis.

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