

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF VOICE CATEGORIES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A THEORETICAL GRAMMAR APPROACH

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Abstract: This paper presents a comparative theoretical analysis of the grammatical category of voice in English and Uzbek. The category of voice reflects the relationship between the subject and the action expressed by the verb, representing one of the core components of verbal morphology and syntax. While English, as an analytic language, primarily expresses voice through syntactic constructions involving auxiliary verbs and participial forms, Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, uses affixation and verb derivation to denote voice distinctions. The study identifies the structural, semantic, and functional characteristics of voice forms in both languages, highlighting the similarities and divergences in their linguistic representation. The findings reveal that although both languages share universal communicative functions such as agency reversal and emphasis on the object, their grammatical mechanisms differ fundamentally. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of voice typology and its role in expressing syntactic relations across unrelated language families.

Keywords: voice category, theoretical grammar, comparative linguistics, passive, reflexive, causative, analytic and agglutinative structures, English, Uzbek.

Introduction

The grammatical category of voice is an essential aspect of the verb system, reflecting how languages encode the relationship between the doer of an action and the action's receiver. It is a category that bridges morphology and syntax, offering insights into how languages structure agency and participant roles.

In English and Uzbek, voice serves similar communicative purposes but is realized through different grammatical means. English distinguishes mainly between **active** and **passive** constructions, expressed through the use of auxiliary verbs (be, get) combined with past participles (was written, is being done). Uzbek, on the other hand, has a richer morphological system, including active, passive, causative, and reflexive voices, all expressed through affixation attached to the verb root (e.g., yozdi – “wrote,” yozildi – “was written,” yozdirildi – “was made to write,” yozindi – “wrote oneself”).

The significance of this study lies in exploring how these typologically distinct systems reflect universal grammatical principles while demonstrating language-specific mechanisms. The research also examines the theoretical implications of voice categorization in relation to transitivity, valency, and syntactic prominence.

Methods



The study applies a comparative-descriptive method, integrating morphological, syntactic, and semantic analysis. Theoretical grammar frameworks by Comrie (1988), Dixon (1994), and Johanson (1998) were used to guide the contrastive examination of voice formation in analytic and agglutinative languages.

Corpus data were collected from literary and academic texts in both English and Uzbek. Examples were selected to represent each major voice type — active, passive, reflexive, reciprocal, and causative — in authentic usage. Morphological segmentation was applied to analyze Uzbek verbal affixes, while syntactic parsing was used for English sentences to identify auxiliary structures and argument shifts.

A typological approach was adopted to determine the degree of grammaticalization of each voice category, while functional analysis helped evaluate communicative roles and pragmatic effects. Comparative mapping allowed for systematic alignment of equivalent constructions and their translation counterparts.

Results and Discussion

The results demonstrate that English voice is predominantly syntactic and analytic, depending on auxiliary verbs and word order, whereas Uzbek voice is morphological and synthetic, relying on derivational suffixes and agglutination.

In English, the passive voice is constructed with the auxiliary *be* or *get* plus a past participle, as in *The book was written by the author*. The subject position is occupied by the patient, while the agent may be optionally expressed in a prepositional phrase (*by the author*). The passive thus functions to shift topicality and focus rather than to create new morphological verb forms.

In Uzbek, however, passivization occurs through morphological derivation: *yozdi* (he wrote) becomes *yozildi* (it was written). Similarly, causative forms such as *yozdir-* (“to make someone write”) and reflexive forms like *yozindi* (“to write oneself”) demonstrate productive derivational mechanisms that directly alter the verb’s valency. This affixal system allows Uzbek to encode multiple levels of agency within a single morphological structure, unlike English, where multiple words are required.

Functionally, both systems serve to shift perspective from the agent to the patient or to indicate the involvement of the subject in performing or experiencing the action. However, English emphasizes information structure and focus, **while** Uzbek highlights morphological relations and causation. The richer morphological marking in Uzbek provides more nuanced distinctions, allowing verbs to carry complex semantic information.

Moreover, while English relies heavily on syntactic rearrangement and contextual inference, Uzbek provides explicit morphological cues. This distinction reflects broader typological contrasts: English prioritizes syntactic flexibility, whereas Uzbek values morphological precision.

Conclusion

The comparative study of the voice category in English and Uzbek reveals that both languages, despite their typological divergence, fulfill similar communicative and grammatical functions



through distinct structural systems. English realizes voice through periphrastic constructions involving auxiliary verbs, while Uzbek employs affixation and derivational morphology to modify verb meaning and argument structure.

From a theoretical grammar perspective, these findings confirm that the category of voice embodies a universal grammatical principle — the expression of participant relations — that manifests differently across languages according to their typological organization. The English system emphasizes syntactic transformation, whereas the Uzbek system prioritizes morphological derivation and valency manipulation.

This contrast demonstrates how language structure shapes meaning and how the cognitive mechanisms underlying action representation are expressed differently in analytic and agglutinative linguistic systems. Understanding these patterns contributes to the broader field of comparative grammar, translation studies, and linguistic typology, offering valuable insights for both theoretical linguists and language educators.

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