

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE GERMAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

Zakirova Soxiba Abdusaliyevna

O'zDJTU nemis tili amaliy fanlar kafedrası o'qıtuvchısı
Uzbekistan, Tashkent

ABSTRACT. This article provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of the English and German languages, elucidating their similarities and distinctions. Furthermore, it delves into the linguistic divergences between the two languages in terms of grammatical structure, lexical resource and phonological conventions. The study also highlights how historical, cultural and social influences have shaped each language's development and contributed to their present-day linguistic identities.

Key words: German language, English language, grammatical differences, pronunciation contrasts, lexical similarities, linguistic features.

Introduction

English and German are regarded as two of the most widely spoken and influential languages in the contemporary world. However, English has no grammatical gender, which makes it comparatively easier than German. In both languages, many words share similar forms and pronunciations. Pronunciation differences are evident in many words. German words are pronounced as they are written, whereas English contains numerous exceptions and irregularities in pronunciation. For instance, father-Vater, house-Haus, hand-Hand.

Similarities between German and English

One notable similarity between English and German lies in the close correspondence between the written and spoken forms of many cognate words, reflecting their shared Germanic linguistic heritage.

Est ist gut = It is good

Good morning = Guten Morgen

Welcome = Willkommen

Another key similarity is that both English and German have a similar set of modal verbs: can – können, must – müssen, should – sollen. Their function is rather similar in the meaning of ability, obligation, necessity, and possibility. The verbs in question are cognates; they are historically related and share some semantic features. Additionally, both are generally stress-timed languages, whereby stressed syllables tend to occur at regular time intervals, while unstressed syllables are reduced or compressed; this feature, however, is more pronounced in English.

Grammatical structure

One major difference relating to grammar concerns gender and article usage. In German, every noun is assigned one of three grammatical genders - masculine, feminine or neuter - which directly affects adjective endings and article forms. In English, words have no grammatical gender and there are two types of articles, including definite (the) and indefinite (a, an) articles. In English, articles are not determined by the grammatical gender of nouns, but rather by



contextual and semantic considerations. Specifically, indefinite articles are employed before singular countable nouns with careful attention to whether the noun begins with a vowel or consonant sound, as this phonetic distinction governs the choice between "a" and "an".

Verb placement also differs considerably. While English typically follows a subject–verb–object (SVO) word order, German allows for greater syntactic flexibility. In subordinate clauses, for instance, the finite verb is placed at the end, which can pose a significant challenge for English speakers learning German. Additionally, German verbs are highly inflected to indicate tense, mood, and person, whereas English relies more heavily on auxiliary verbs and consistent syntactic structures to express these grammatical functions. Moreover, there is one notable similarity, which lies in their use of modal verbs to convey necessity, possibility or permission and English and German both utilize derivational morphology, including prefixes and suffixes, to generate related lexical items, enhancing the productivity and flexibility of word formation.

In German compound and complex sentences, when subordinate elements are employed, the verb's position is changed, and it goes to the end of the clause. For instance: Ich bin gestern nicht zur Schule gegangen, weil ich krank war. On the contrary, in English the verb's position does not change; it still comes after the subject. To give an example, I did not go to school yesterday because I was ill. Nevertheless, in German the rule does not hold for all conjunctions. With some conjunctions, the order of the sentence stays the same and the verb does not go to the end. Conjunctions like und, oder, and aber are examples of such conjunctions. For example: Ich möchte ins Kino gehen, aber ich bin sehr müde. German and English are very different languages concerning verb types and use of auxiliary verbs. For illustration, for creating "Perfekt" (past tense), one usually employs an auxiliary verb "haben" or "sein," while placing the key verb at the end of a phrase. For illustration, "Ich habe Fußball gespielt." In contrast, an English sentence utilizes an auxiliary verb "have" or "has," placed at the end, while an "English sentence structure does not change concerning verb position." A good example sentence will follow: "I have played football."

With regard to sentence complexity and amplitude, the typical German sentence is usually complex with compound words and subordinating conjunctions. The sentences in the English language are relatively shorter and simpler, although they can be varied with the help of synonyms and a range of lexical possibilities.

Lexical resource

Concerning vocabulary, English and German share borrowed words from either Latin or French. Despite this, vocabulary in English is more extensive compared to German. Additionally, German has a substantial number of compound words, which consist of a collection of small words combined to create a long compound word, unlike English that uses shorter words to convey these words. Further, in German language, there is also the method of forming new verbs through the use of prefixes/particles on a verb. Beispiel: kommen → ankommen, mitkommen, zurückkommen. In der englischen Sprache sind dergleichen Verb-Suffixinomischemelnde Selthmlich rare; es kommen viel liehrfreqmphrase Verbil verschiedene Bed. For instance: come → come in, come back, come along.

There are also differences regarding negation. In German, the negation is done by "nicht" and "kein," and it depends on where the verb is placed. For instance: "Ich habe keinen Hunger." In English, negation involves an auxiliary verb and "not": "do," "does," and "did," followed by "not." For instance: "I do not have hunger." There are also some differences regarding plurality



and agreement with verbs. In German, verbs are agreeing with both person and plural. For instance: “Die Kinder spielen.” In English, on the other hand, “verbs are not changed,” but an -s is added for third person plural. For instance: “The children play. He plays.”

There is also variation in the differences in tenses formed using auxiliary verbs. While in the German language, the Perfekt and Plusquamperfekt tenses are formed with an auxiliary verb of 'haben' or 'sein,' with the main verb positioned at the end of the sentence. For example, Ich habe gespielt. (I have played.) or Ich war gegangen. (I had gone). In the English language, the construction of the present perfect and past perfect tenses involves 'have/'has' + past participle. However, the position of the verb is unchanged. For example, I have played. / I had gone.

Furthermore, there are differences in terms of parts of speech and inflection. German has a highly inflected language where nouns, adjectives, and verbs are highly inflected. For example, adjectives are inflected depending on the article and case. ein guter Mann/eine gute Frau/ein gutes Kind. On the contrary, English has very little inflection, where adjectives and most verbs are not inflected. a good man/a good woman/a good child. Moreover, another important variation is that in the English language only the names of persons and places have the first letter as upper case, but in the German language the first letter of all nouns is upper case whether the nouns are animate or inanimate. For example: I saw a dog in London. Here, the word “dog” starts with a lower case letter, but the word “London” starts with an upper case letter. On the other hand, in the German language, all nouns start with upper case letters. For example: ich habe einen Hund vor dem Haus gesehen. Here, the words “Hund,” “Haus,” and so on are the nouns that start with upper case letters.

Pronunciation

There are also significant differences in the relation between spelling and pronunciation. Each German word is usually pronounced as it is spelled. The rules of pronunciation are quite stable. For illustration: Haus → /haʊs/, kommen → /'kɔmən/. On the other hand, in English, there can often be a big gap between spelling and pronunciation with many exceptions. Examples include for instance, though, through, tough, thought. It leads to the English pronunciation being regarded as harder to learn.

Additionally, in terms of stress patterns, German stress is predominantly on the first syllable. Example: ARbeiten, FREUndlich

Note, though: stress in English varies depending on the word, with the wrong stress sometimes carrying a different meaning. For instance: REcord (noun) versus reCORD (verb). Vowel sounds: German vowels are well-pronounced and distinct; the difference between a long and a short vowel is phonemically relevant. For example: Bieten vs Bitten.

In English, on the contrary, the vowel system is a lot more developed, and vowel reduction (mainly the use of the schwa /ə/) is very common. For example: about, teacher. Final devoicing is a process in which voiced consonants become voiceless in word-final position, and it is exhibited by German. Tag → /tak/.

In English, though, voiced consonants remain word-finally. Example: dog → /dɒg/.

Connected speech: Lastly, German words are clearly pronounced and separate, while in English, the words are linked and often reduced by linking and elision, for instance.



For example: next please → /neks pli:z/.

Pronunciation Differences between German and English

Advanced level: The differences in pronunciation between German and English represent fundamentally different phonological approaches. English makes extensive use of vowel reduction, connected speech, and variable stress, which creates a smooth but less transparent pronunciation. In contrast, German focuses on clarity of articulation and phonological stability; it has very little reduction, even in unstressed syllables. Furthermore, in English, much more meaning, attitude, and speaker intent is carried by the intonation than in German, which depends more on syntactic structure than on prosody. Therefore, speech in English often sounds flowing and emotive; speech in German, on the other hand, can come across as very clear-cut and segmented.

In all, English pronunciation focuses on efficiency and communicative flexibility, while German pronunciation favors clarity and structural accuracy; both illustrate two different phonological philosophies in closely related languages.

Conclusion

In the end, the essential factor in the German language is accuracy of structure, logic of development, and expression of meaning, while in the English language the emphasis is on the efficiency of communication, flexibility of style, and general understanding. On the surface, these opposing features will show how two related languages can develop into two different language systems with their distinctive approaches to communication.

English, being the other language, has a more malleable and economical grammatical structure. This is because English has a simpler inflectional morphology with a fixed position of words in a sentence and makes frequent use of auxiliary verbs, all of which help it to be an efficient means of communication. Moreover, it has an impressive vocabulary, majorly borrowed from Latin and French, enabling it to convey complex messages.

References.

1. Henry, Victor. *A Short Comparative Grammar of English and German: As Traced Back to Their Common Origin and Contrasted with the Classical Languages*. S. Sonnenschein & Company, 1894.
2. Peissner, Elias. *A Comparative English-German Grammar Based on the Affinity of the Two Languages*. Classic Reprint.
3. Biber, Douglas; Johansson, Stig; Leech, Geoffrey; Conrad, Susan; Finegan, Edward. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Longman, 1999.
4. Durrell, Martin (ed.). *Hammer's German Grammar and Usage*. (numerous editions)
5. Quirk, Randolph; Greenbaum, Sidney; Leech, Geoffrey; Svartvik, Jan. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman, 1985.

