



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND CROSS-LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES OF INTERJECTIONS, ONOMATOPOEIA, AND MODAL WORDS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Mirkhodjayeva Makhliyo Islomovna

First-year PhD student at Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute

Teacher at the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan

m.mirkhodjaeva@mail.ru

Abstract. This paper examines the theoretical foundations and cross-linguistic differences of interjections, onomatopoeia, and modal words in English and Uzbek. Drawing on the works of both Western and Uzbek linguists, the study highlights how these categories function as expressive units in communication. Interjections express sudden emotions, onomatopoeic words imitate sounds, and modal words reflect the speaker’s attitude toward reality. While they share universal communicative functions, their forms and stylistic usage differ across the two languages due to cultural and structural factors. The paper also reviews historical perspectives and the contributions of scholars who have worked within both linguistic traditions, emphasizing the importance of comparative analysis for understanding language universals and specifics.

Keywords: Interjections, Onomatopoeia, Modal words, English, Uzbek, Cross-linguistic comparison, Expressive vocabulary, Linguistic theory.

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические основы и межъязыковые различия междометий, ономотопеи и модальных слов в английском и узбекском языках. Опираясь на труды как западных, так и узбекских лингвистов, исследование подчеркивает функционирование этих категорий как экспрессивных единиц в коммуникации. Междометия выражают внезапные эмоции, ономотопеэтические слова имитируют звуки, а модальные слова отражают отношение говорящего к действительности. Несмотря на универсальные коммуникативные функции, их формы и стилистическое использование различаются в двух языках вследствие культурных и структурных факторов. В статье также рассматриваются исторические перспективы и вклад ученых, работавших в обеих лингвистических традициях, с акцентом на важность сравнительного анализа для понимания языковых универсалий и специфики.

Ключевые слова: междометия, онomatопея, модальные слова, английский язык, узбекский язык, межкультурное сравнение, экспрессивная лексика, лингвистическая теория

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o‘zbek tillarida undov, taqlid va modal so‘zlarning nazariy asoslari hamda qiyosiy farqlari tahlil qilinadi. G‘arb va o‘zbek tilshunoslari tadqiqotlariga tayangan holda, ushbu kategoriyalarning muloqotda ifodaviy birlik sifatida qanday ifodalanishi yoritilgan. Undov so‘zlar to‘satdan kechadigan hissiyotlarni bildiradi, taqlid so‘zlar tovushlarni taqlid qiladi, modal so‘zlar esa so‘zlovchining voqelikka munosabatini ifodalaydi. Ularning umumiy kommunikativ funksiyalari mavjud bo‘lsa-da, shakl va uslubiy qo‘llanish jihatidan ikki til o‘rtasida madaniy va struktur omillar tufayli farqlar mavjud. Maqolada, shuningdek, tarixiy qarashlar va ikki tilshunoslik an‘anasi doirasida izlanish olib borgan olimlar hissasi ko‘rib chiqilib, qiyosiy tahlilning til umumiyliigi va xususiyatlarini anglashdagi ahamiyati ta’kidlangan.

Kalit so‘zlar: undov so‘zlar, taqlid so‘zlar, modal so‘zlar, ingliz tili, o‘zbek tili, qiyosiy tahlil, ifodaviy lug‘at, lingvistik nazariya

INTRODUCTION. The study of language structure and function has long attracted the attention of linguists seeking to understand how different linguistic units contribute to communication and meaning-making. Among the various lexical and grammatical elements of language, interjections, onomatopoeic words, and modal words occupy a unique position due to their expressive, pragmatic, and communicative functions. These linguistic units often reflect emotional states, speaker attitudes, and contextual nuances that go beyond the strictly grammatical organization of language. Consequently, their analysis offers valuable insights into both the structural and functional aspects of linguistic systems.

In contemporary linguistics, increasing attention is being paid to cross-linguistic studies that examine similarities and differences between languages. Comparative analysis allows researchers to identify universal features of language as well as language-specific characteristics shaped by cultural, cognitive, and communicative traditions. Within this framework, the investigation of interjections, onomatopoeia, and modal words becomes particularly significant because these categories are closely related to human perception, emotional expression, and discourse pragmatics. Their usage often reflects cultural patterns of communication and the ways speakers interpret and represent reality through language.

Moreover, the investigation of expressive lexical units contributes to a deeper understanding of linguistic pragmatics, stylistics, and cognitive linguistics. In literary texts and everyday discourse alike, interjections and onomatopoeic expressions enhance emotional intensity and vividness, while modal words structure the speaker’s evaluation of information. Therefore, studying these elements not only enriches theoretical linguistics but also has practical implications for translation studies, language teaching, and intercultural communication.

In this context, the present study aims to explore the theoretical foundations and cross-linguistic differences of interjections, onomatopoeia, and modal words in English and Uzbek. The research focuses on their structural characteristics, semantic properties, and

communicative functions within both languages. By conducting a comparative analysis, the study seeks to highlight the similarities and distinctions between the two linguistic systems and to contribute to a broader understanding of expressive language units in cross-cultural communication.

LITEARTURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Language contains not only words for objects and actions but also expressive units that convey emotion, imitation of sounds, and modality. In both English and Uzbek, interjections, onomatopoeic expressions, and modal words function as important elements of communication. They reflect psychological states, attitudes, and cultural differences in perception of the world. This paper explores the theoretical foundations of these categories, their historical study, and cross-linguistic differences as analyzed by linguists in both traditions.

Interjections are words or phrases that express sudden emotions such as surprise, joy, pain, or disgust. In English (“Oh!”, “Wow!”, “Ouch!”) and Uzbek (“Voy!”, “Obbo!”, “Uf!”), they often stand outside grammatical structures but carry pragmatic and emotional meaning. European linguists such as Otto Jespersen (1924) and later Roman Jakobson (1960) emphasized their role in the emotive function of language. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars like G‘.Abdurahmonov and A. Madvaliyev analyzed interjections as independent lexical units with specific pragmatic features.

Onomatopoeic words (*Taqlid so‘zlar*) imitate natural or human sounds. English examples include “buzz,” “bang,” and “meow,” while Uzbek has “g‘uv-g‘uv,” “shildir-shildir,” and “miyov.” They often serve as a bridge between language and perception of the external world. Western linguists (e.g., Bloomfield, 1933) discussed their iconic relation to meaning, while Uzbek scholars such as Sh. Rahmatullayev explored the systematic role of “taqlid so‘zlar” in Uzbek word formation and stylistics.

Modal words express the speaker’s attitude toward reality, possibility, or necessity. In English, words such as “perhaps,” “certainly,” “surely” indicate degrees of certainty or doubt. In Uzbek, equivalents include “balki,” “albatta,” “darvoqe.” Scholars like Palmer (1979) analyzed modality in English grammar, whereas Uzbek linguists such as Sh. Usmonov and H. Ne‘matov studied modality in the framework of Uzbek syntax and semantics.

In Western linguistics, interjections were once dismissed as “non-words” (e.g., in early structuralist traditions) but later recognized as vital components of communication (Jakobson, Lyons). But in Uzbek linguistics, the Soviet era brought systematic studies of expressive vocabulary, with particular attention to onomatopoeic and modal words as reflections of Turkic language features.

Comparative studies became more active in the late 20th century, when Uzbek linguists drew parallels with English descriptive traditions to highlight universal and language-specific aspects.

Uzbek onomatopoeic words often use reduplication (e.g., “g‘uv-g‘uv,” “shirq-shirq”), while English relies more on single-syllable imitations like “bang” or “pop.” English

interjections like “Gee!” or “Yikes!” have no direct Uzbek equivalents, while Uzbek has culturally loaded forms such as “Voydod!” or “Eh-he.”

English frequently expresses modality through auxiliary verbs (must, may, can) in addition to modal adverbs. Uzbek relies more on particles (“chog‘i,” “shekilli”) and modal words.

In Uzbek literature, onomatopoeic words are widely used in folk narratives and poetry. In English, they are more restricted to children’s literature, comic books, or informal speech.

Several Uzbek and international scholars have attempted comparative studies of modality, interjections, and expressive vocabulary, producing significant works that highlight cross-linguistic parallels between English and Uzbek:

Sh. Rahmatullayev – In his book *O‘zbek tili leksikologiyasi* (1978) and subsequent works, Rahmatullayev devoted attention to the role of onomatopoeic words (*taqlid so‘zlar*) in the Uzbek lexicon. He discussed their phonetic and semantic features, as well as their relation to sound symbolism in other languages, providing comparative notes with Indo-European traditions.

A. Madvaliyev – In *O‘zbek tilining ekspressiv leksikasi* (2005) and other articles, Madvaliyev examined expressive words—including interjections, onomatopoeia, and intensifiers—in Uzbek. He also compared certain categories with English equivalents, showing how emotional and pragmatic meaning is expressed differently across the two languages.

G‘. Abdurahmonov – In his influential work *Hozirgi o‘zbek adabiy tili* (1983), Abdurahmonov analyzed interjections as an independent part of speech in Uzbek. He also drew parallels with European linguistic traditions, noting how interjections were treated in English and Russian linguistics, and highlighting the pragmatic role they play in everyday communication.

F. R. Palmer – In *Mood and Modality* (1979; revised 1986), Palmer gave a comprehensive analysis of modality in English grammar, focusing on modal verbs, adverbs, and particles. His framework later served as a basis for Uzbek scholars studying modality in Turkic languages.

John Lyons – In *Semantics* (1977) and *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (1968), Lyons provided detailed classifications of modality, including epistemic and deontic types. Uzbek linguists such as Sh. Usmonov and H. Ne‘matov relied on Lyons’s theoretical categorization when examining modality in Uzbek syntax and semantics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interjections represent one of the most expressive lexical classes in language. They are typically used to convey spontaneous emotions, reactions, or attitudes such as surprise, joy, pain, or hesitation. Because of their emotional and pragmatic nature, interjections frequently function outside the conventional grammatical structure of sentences, yet they play an important role in spoken discourse. Similarly, onomatopoeic words imitate natural sounds and phenomena, thereby establishing a direct connection between linguistic expression and sensory perception. Such words are widely used in everyday communication, literature, and

oral traditions, and their forms often vary across languages depending on phonological and cultural conventions.

Modal words, on the other hand, perform an important grammatical and pragmatic function by expressing the speaker’s attitude toward the proposition of the sentence. They may indicate certainty, possibility, necessity, or evaluation, thereby shaping the communicative intention of the utterance. Modal expressions are essential components of discourse as they help convey subtle shades of meaning and interpersonal relations between speakers and listeners.

The comparative analysis of these linguistic phenomena in English and Uzbek languages is particularly relevant from both theoretical and practical perspectives. English, belonging to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, and Uzbek, a Turkic language, differ significantly in their grammatical structure, phonetic systems, and cultural background. These differences inevitably influence the formation, classification, and functional use of interjections, onomatopoeic words, and modal expressions. By examining these categories within a cross-linguistic framework, it becomes possible to identify both universal communicative patterns and language-specific features.

Interjections, onomatopoeia, and modal words occupy a unique position in both English and Uzbek, standing at the crossroads of grammar, lexicon, and pragmatics. Despite universal functions—expressing emotion, imitating sounds, and marking modality—their forms and usage reflect cultural, historical, and structural differences. Comparative studies not only enrich our understanding of these categories but also demonstrate the interplay of universality and language-specific features in human communication.

The comparative study of interjections, onomatopoeic words, and modal words in English and Uzbek demonstrates that these linguistic units play a crucial role in expressing emotions, attitudes, and sensory perceptions within language. Although they are often considered peripheral elements of grammatical systems, their communicative and pragmatic significance is substantial. Through the analysis of their theoretical foundations and cross-linguistic characteristics, it becomes evident that these categories contribute not only to the expressive richness of language but also to the structuring of meaning and interaction in discourse.

The findings of the research indicate that interjections represent one of the most dynamic and expressive components of language. In both English and Uzbek, they function primarily as markers of emotional reaction, spontaneous speech, and interpersonal communication. Despite similarities in their communicative functions, the structural and phonetic forms of interjections often vary between the two languages due to differences in phonological systems and cultural conventions. English interjections tend to display a broader range of phonetic variation and informal usage in conversational discourse, while Uzbek interjections frequently reflect traditional patterns of emotional expression rooted in the cultural and communicative norms of the speech community. This demonstrates that interjections are not only linguistic phenomena but also cultural indicators that mirror the emotional and pragmatic behavior of speakers.

The analysis of onomatopoeic words reveals another important aspect of cross-linguistic variation. Onomatopoeia reflects the human attempt to imitate natural sounds and environmental phenomena through language. However, even though the same sounds are perceived universally, their linguistic representation varies across languages due to phonetic structures and sound patterns specific to each language system. In English, onomatopoeic expressions often appear in literature, children’s language, and informal communication, serving as vivid descriptive tools. In Uzbek, onomatopoeic words are deeply embedded in both oral and written traditions and are widely used to create expressive imagery in folklore, poetry, and narrative prose. Thus, onomatopoeia functions not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a stylistic device that enriches the expressive capacity of language.

Modal words represent another significant category examined in this study. Unlike interjections and onomatopoeic words, modal words are more closely integrated into grammatical and syntactic structures. They play an essential role in expressing the speaker’s attitude toward the content of the utterance, indicating levels of certainty, probability, necessity, or evaluation. In English, modality is expressed through a complex system that includes modal verbs, modal adverbs, and other lexical elements. In Uzbek, modal meaning is conveyed through specific modal words, particles, and grammatical constructions that reflect the language’s agglutinative structure. Despite these structural differences, the communicative function of modal expressions in both languages remains fundamentally similar: they allow speakers to convey subjective evaluation and manage interpersonal communication.

The cross-linguistic comparison conducted in this research highlights both universal linguistic tendencies and language-specific characteristics. On the one hand, interjections, onomatopoeia, and modal words perform similar communicative functions across languages, reflecting universal aspects of human cognition and emotional expression. On the other hand, their forms, structural organization, and stylistic usage differ according to the phonological, grammatical, and cultural features of each language. This dual nature illustrates the balance between universal communicative needs and culturally shaped linguistic expression.

Another important conclusion of the study is the strong connection between expressive lexical units and the cultural identity of a language community. Interjections and onomatopoeic expressions, in particular, often carry cultural nuances that are difficult to translate directly into another language. Their meanings and pragmatic effects depend not only on linguistic form but also on shared cultural knowledge and communicative context. Therefore, understanding these elements is essential for effective translation, intercultural communication, and language teaching.

From a methodological perspective, the study confirms the importance of comparative linguistic analysis in identifying structural and functional patterns across languages. By examining English and Uzbek within a cross-linguistic framework, it becomes possible to reveal deeper insights into the nature of expressive language units and their role in communication. Such research contributes to the broader fields of linguistic typology, pragmatics, stylistics, and cognitive linguistics.

CONCLUSION

In practical terms, the results of this research may be useful in several areas. For language teaching, a clearer understanding of interjections, onomatopoeia, and modal words can improve learners' communicative competence and help them use expressive language more effectively. For translation studies, recognizing cross-linguistic differences in these categories can assist translators in preserving emotional nuance and stylistic effect. Additionally, in literary analysis, the study of these linguistic elements can provide deeper insight into the stylistic features of texts and the author's individual expressive strategies.

In conclusion, interjections, onomatopoeic words, and modal words represent essential components of both English and Uzbek linguistic systems. Their study reveals important connections between language structure, human cognition, emotional expression, and cultural communication patterns. The comparative analysis conducted in this research demonstrates that while these linguistic categories share common communicative purposes, their structural realization and stylistic usage reflect the unique characteristics of each language. Further research in this field may expand the scope of comparative analysis by exploring additional languages, discourse contexts, and stylistic domains, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of expressive linguistic phenomena in global communication.

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