

PRAGMALINGUISTIC FEATURES OF PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: This article explores the pragmalinguistic features of passive constructions in English and Uzbek. The study focuses on how passive voice functions not only as a grammatical structure but also as a communicative and pragmatic tool in discourse. Through comparative analysis, the research identifies similarities and differences in the use of passive constructions in both languages, particularly in academic, official, and everyday contexts. The findings reveal that while English frequently employs morphological passive forms, Uzbek tends to combine morphological and syntactic means to express passive meaning. Pragmatic factors such as focus, topicalization, politeness, and agent suppression play a significant role in both languages.

Keywords: passive voice, pragmatics, pragmalinguistics, English language, Uzbek language, comparative linguistics, discourse analysis

Introduction

Language is not only a system of grammatical rules but also a means of communication shaped by context, intention, and social interaction. One of the structures that clearly demonstrates the interaction between grammar and pragmatics is the passive construction. Traditionally, passive voice is studied from a syntactic or morphological perspective. However, its pragmatic functions in discourse are equally important.

In English, passive constructions are widely used in academic writing, official documents, scientific discourse, and media language. In Uzbek, passive forms also exist, but their usage patterns differ due to typological and structural distinctions between the two languages.

This article aims to analyze the pragmalinguistic features of passive constructions in English and Uzbek and to determine how these constructions function in real communicative situations.

Literature Review

Passive constructions have long been studied in structural linguistics. Traditional grammar defines passive voice as a transformation in which the object of an active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence, while the agent is either omitted or expressed in a prepositional phrase.

From a pragmatic perspective, scholars emphasize that the passive is often used to:

- Suppress or hide the agent,
- Emphasize the action or result,
- Maintain thematic continuity,
- Express politeness or objectivity.

In English linguistics, passive voice is considered a central feature of formal and academic style. In Uzbek linguistics, passive meaning is commonly expressed through verbal affixes such as -il, -in, and -n. However, Uzbek discourse often prefers active constructions where English would use passive.

Despite numerous grammatical studies, comparative pragmalinguistic research between English and Uzbek passive constructions remains limited. This article attempts to contribute to that field.

Methodology

The study uses a comparative and descriptive method. Examples were selected from academic texts, media materials, and literary sources in both languages. The analysis focuses on:

- ✓ Structural formation of passive constructions,
- ✓ Pragmatic functions in context,
- ✓ Frequency and stylistic distribution,
- ✓ Agent suppression strategies.

The comparison is qualitative in nature and aims to reveal functional differences rather than purely statistical data.

Structural Features of Passive Constructions

Passive in English

In English, passive voice is typically formed using the auxiliary verb to be followed by the past participle:

The experiment was conducted.

The book was written by the author.

The agent may be expressed using the preposition by, but in many cases it is omitted:

The decision was made.

English allows passive constructions in various tenses and aspects:

Present passive: is written

Past passive: was written

Present perfect passive: has been written

Modal passive: can be done

This structural flexibility makes passive voice highly productive in English.

Passive in Uzbek

In Uzbek, passive meaning is expressed morphologically through suffixes attached to the verb stem:

yozilmoq (to be written)

qurilmoq (to be built)

aytilmoq (to be said)

For example:

Kitob yozildi. (The book was written.)

Uy qurildi. (The house was built.)

Unlike English, Uzbek does not require an auxiliary verb to form the passive. The passive marker is integrated into the verb itself.

However, in many contexts where English uses passive constructions, Uzbek may prefer active or impersonal forms.

Pragmalinguistic Functions

1. Agent Suppression

One of the most important pragmatic functions of passive constructions in both languages is agent suppression.

In English:

Mistakes were made.

The documents were lost.

These examples avoid mentioning who performed the action. This may serve political, social, or stylistic purposes.

In Uzbek:

Xatolar qilindi.

Hujjatlar yo'qotildi.

Similarly, the agent is omitted, focusing attention on the action or result rather than the performer.

Agent suppression is particularly common in official discourse, media reports, and academic writing.

2. Focus and Information Structure

Passive constructions allow speakers to control information flow in discourse.

In English:

The new policy was introduced yesterday.

Here, "the new policy" becomes the topic of the sentence. The passive structure helps maintain thematic continuity when the topic is already known.

In Uzbek:

Yangi siyosat kecha joriy etildi.

Likewise, the passive construction places the emphasis on “yangi siyosat,” which functions as the topic.

Thus, in both languages, passive voice serves as a tool for organizing discourse and managing information structure.

3. Objectivity and Formality

English academic writing frequently uses passive constructions to create an impersonal and objective tone:

The data were analyzed.

The results were obtained through observation.

The use of passive voice removes the researcher from the foreground and emphasizes the process or result.

In Uzbek academic writing:

Ma'lumotlar tahlil qilindi.

Natijalar kuzatish orqali olindi.

Similarly, passive constructions contribute to a formal and neutral style. However, modern academic English increasingly allows limited use of active voice (“We analyzed the data”), whereas Uzbek academic tradition still strongly favors impersonal forms.

4. Politeness and Indirectness

In some contexts, passive constructions soften statements and make them less direct.

English example:

You are requested to submit the form.

This sounds more polite than:

Submit the form.

Uzbek example:

Ariza topshirishingiz so'raladi.

The passive form reduces directness and creates a more respectful tone. This is especially important in institutional and administrative communication.

Differences Between English and Uzbek Passive Usage

Despite similarities, several differences can be observed:

Frequency: English uses passive constructions more frequently, especially in scientific texts.

Structural Type: English passive relies on auxiliary verbs, while Uzbek uses affixation.

Stylistic Preference: Uzbek sometimes prefers active or impersonal constructions where English strongly prefers passive.

Agent Expression: English allows explicit agent marking with “by,” whereas Uzbek rarely expresses the agent in passive constructions.

For example:

English:

The novel was written by the author in 1920.

Uzbek translation often avoids agent expression in passive form and may switch to active:

Muallif romanni 1920-yilda yozgan.

This demonstrates a stylistic difference influenced by typological and discourse norms.

Discussion

The analysis shows that passive constructions in both languages are not merely grammatical transformations but pragmatic tools shaped by communicative goals. Speakers choose passive voice to:

- Highlight results,
- Maintain topic continuity,
- Avoid responsibility,
- Create objectivity,
- Express politeness.

However, the extent and frequency of passive usage are influenced by language structure and stylistic tradition.

English, as an analytic language, relies heavily on syntactic devices for pragmatic effects. Uzbek, being an agglutinative language, integrates passive meaning morphologically and sometimes prefers alternative strategies.

These differences reflect broader typological and cultural patterns in communication.

Conclusion

Passive constructions in English and Uzbek serve important pragmalinguistic functions beyond their grammatical structure. While both languages use passive voice to suppress the agent, manage information structure, and create formal tone, they differ in structural formation and frequency of use.

English demonstrates a higher degree of passive productivity, especially in academic discourse. Uzbek employs morphological markers and often combines passive forms with impersonal constructions.

Understanding these differences is essential for translators, language learners, and researchers engaged in comparative linguistics. Further research may include corpus-based quantitative analysis to provide statistical confirmation of these findings.

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