

## PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF VERBAL COLLOCATIONS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY TEXTS

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**Abstract.** The present study investigates the pragmatic functions of verbal collocations in English and Uzbek literary discourse by means of a comparative linguistic analysis. Collocations of verbs, which are termed as combinations of verbs with the other elements like nouns or lexical items that have become customary, perform very important communication roles which are sometimes even more than their ways of expressing through literal meaning. The study brings to light the collateral roles that enlightened by the different sets of pragmatic mechanisms for collocational choices in literary language which is a point of interest to contrastive linguistics and translation studies.

**Keywords:** verbal collocations, pragmatic functions, contrastive analysis, English language, Uzbek language, literary discourse

**Аннотация.** В данной статье рассматриваются прагматические функции глагольных коллокаций в английском и узбекском литературном дискурсе посредством сравнительно-лингвистического анализа. Глагольные коллокации, определяемые как конвенциональные сочетания глаголов с существительными или другими лексическими элементами, служат важным коммуникативным целям, выходящим за рамки их буквального семантического содержания. Исследование вносит вклад в контрастивную лингвистику и переводоведение, освещая прагматические механизмы, лежащие в основе выбора коллокаций в литературном языке.

**Ключевые слова:** глагольные коллокации, прагматические функции, контрастивный анализ, английский язык, узбекский язык, литературный дискурс

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o‘zbek adabiy nutqida fe’l birikmalarining pragmatik vazifalari qiyosiy lingvistik tahlil orqali ko‘rib chiqiladi. Fe’llarning ot yoki boshqa leksik elementlar bilan shartli birikmasi sifatida aniqlangan fe’l birikmalari ularning to’g’ridan-to’g’ri semantik mazmunidan tashqari muhim kommunikativ maqsadlarga ham xizmat qiladi. Tadqiqot adabiy tilda qo‘shma gaplarni tanlashning pragmatik mexanizmlarini yoritib berish orqali qarama-qarshi tilshunoslik va tarjimashunoslikka hissa qo‘shadi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** fe’l birikmalar, pragmatik funksiyalar, kontrastiv tahlil, ingliz, o‘zbek, adabiy nutq

## INTRODUCTION

Verbal collocations are essential for natural language production and comprehension, and they are defined as word combinations that native speakers and language learners recognize as typical and idiomatic [1]. Literary discourse goes beyond the meaning of these lexical partners and uses them to shape reader interpretation, establish narrative tone, and convey culture through sophisticated pragmatic functions. The collocation patterns of English and Uzbek languages, which are typologically very different, give very good insights into the lexical patterning and pragmatic meaning construction interface.

The research done so far has shown the importance of collocations for the fluency and naturalness of the language, however, the pragmatic aspect of verbal collocations in literary contexts has not yet been fully explored within contrastive frameworks [2]. To fill this gap, the current study aims to show by means of example how verbal collocations are at play pragmatically in the case of English and Uzbek literary texts, to investigate what communicative strategies the authors use through collocational choices and what the cultural-linguistic factors are that influence these patterns. The research will also attempt to ascertain the degree of difference between the two languages in terms of how much collocations are utilized for the purposes of speech act realization, register differentiation, and stylistic effect, along with the systematic differences that become evident through the comparison.

## METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This research study's theoretical framework is based on the crossing of several areas of linguistics research. Collocational theory developed by Firth [2] and later contributed to by Sinclair [9] affirms that the meaning of words cannot be entirely understood if they are not in context, but rather by typical co-occurrence patterns. Hoey [3] has taken this view a step further by proposing through his lexical priming theory that words will get mentally linked to their typical collocates and pragmatic contexts. In the field of pragmatics, speech act theory [4][5] offers means of analysis for dealing with how the elements of language perform communication actions and Leech's [6] pragmatic maxims show how the speakers realize their interpersonal goals through the selection of words.

The merging of these theories facilitates the analysis of verbal collocations as conventionalized vehicles for pragmatic functions. The patterns of English collocations have been thoroughly documented through research, for instance, delexicalized verb constructions are one of the examples, where the combination of light semantic verbs "make", "take", "give", and "have" with very general nouns to convey actions normally expressed by a single verb [7]. These constructions carry pragmatic load through the marking of register, levels of formality, and the use of subtle semantic fading. The comparative studies with Uzbek done so far have emphasized more on educational

implications and the general typological description rather than the pragmatic functions. Jalolov et al. [8] addressed the problems of English-Uzbek translation and this included revealing of different usages of collocations as well as the systematic differences in collocational preferences, whereas Mirzaeva [9] dealt with phraseological units without focusing on specific pragmatic aspects. Yusupov [10] provided foundational contrastive analysis between English and Uzbek but did not focus specifically on the pragmatic dimensions of verbal collocations in literary contexts.

The methodological approach employed in this research combines qualitative textual analysis with contrastive linguistic principles. The corpus consists of excerpts from contemporary English novels and Uzbek prose works, selected to represent comparable literary registers and narrative styles.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study indicates that there are certain characteristics across English and Uzbek literary texts relating to the use of verbal collocations in a pragmatic way. In real-life communication, the two languages have the same practice of using verbal collocations as conventionalized forms of conveying the speech acts, but they differ in preference of structure [1][8]. Directives and commissives are among the speech acts that try the English route of using delexicalized verb phrases, such as "make a promise," "give permission," "take responsibility," where the light verb is paired with an abstract noun coming from or linked to a more semantically specific verb [9]. The association with the register of formality and the conventionality are the source of the pragmatic power of such constructions which, thus, are often seen as formal or slow. On the other hand, Uzbek language conveys the same pragmatically through various means which are structurally different, for example, it often involves using complex predicates where the nominal part is the one that conveys the core meaning while the verbal part only adds aspect or modality [10]. The expression "va'da bermoq" (promise give) is similar to "give a promise" in English in that both share the same structure but differ in that the former is within a different morphological system where aspect marks are done with auxiliary verbs instead of the main verb as in English. The forms of speech act and the function of highlighting the speech act still run parallel but the linguistic realization still shows typological limitations.

Register differentiation serves as a major pragmatic function, with collocational choices, for instance, signaling stylistic level and social positioning [6]. It is already a critical tool for the English literary texts to reveal certain discrete features corresponding to the formal collocations, which are typical of the elevated narrative style, and colloquial ones. The coupling of "make an attempt" and "try," "reach a decision" and "decide," or "take into consideration" and "consider," not only marks the register but also the characterization and narrative viewpoint [4]. Writers render these variants for pragmatic

purposes, using formal verbal collocations to claim authority, distance, or irony. Besides, Uzbek literary language has similarly applied the variation of collocations as a means of register marking; however, the distinction often works through the selection of nominal elements and through Turkish versus Persian or Arabic-derived lexical components [10]. The Persian-influenced collocations such as “fikr yuritmoq” (thought conduct, meaning to think/reflect) versus Turkic alternatives like “o'ylamoq” (to think) create register distinctions that carry pragmatic weight in characterization and narrative voice, for example. The Persian-influenced forms usually indicate a higher register and more formal or philosophical contexts, functioning pragmatically to socially position and intellectually characterize the characters. This trend exhibits that historical language contact has been a source of pragmatic resources through the variation in collocational usage.

Interpersonal pragmatic functions manifest through collocations that manage face, express politeness, or convey attitude [6]. English verbal collocations frequently serve face-saving functions through indirectness and nominalization, as when "I have concerns about" replaces more direct expressions of criticism or disagreement. The collocational form distances the speaker from direct confrontation while maintaining propositional content. Literary dialogue exploits these patterns to characterize relationships and social dynamics. Uzbek employs similar strategies through collocations that incorporate honorific or diminutive elements, creating pragmatic gradations of directness and respect [7][10]. The choice between direct verbal forms and collocational alternatives involving nouns with honorific suffixes allows for fine-tuned pragmatic calibration of interpersonal stance. Additionally, Uzbek literary language demonstrates culture-specific collocations that encode traditional social relationships and value systems, such as those related to hospitality, respect for elders, and communal obligations, which lack direct English equivalents and require pragmatic adaptation in translation [5].

Cross-linguistic comparison reveals both universal pragmatic motivations and language-specific realizations in verbal collocational patterns [2][9]. Universal tendencies include the use of collocations for face management, register marking, and speech act conventionalization across both languages [1][6]. However, the structural means differ substantially due to typological constraints. English reliance on light verb constructions reflects analytic tendencies and limited verbal morphology, while Uzbek demonstrates synthetic strategies with greater morphological integration [10]. Cultural-pragmatic differences emerge in the semantic domains most elaborated through collocational systems, with English showing extensive development in commercial, legal, and institutional domains, while Uzbek demonstrates rich collocational networks around social relationships, traditional practices, and moral-ethical concepts [7].

## CONCLUSION

This comparative analysis uncovers the fact that the usage of verbal collocations in English and Uzbek literary texts is not only limited to their compositional semantic content but also serves significant pragmatic functions. Both languages use verbal collocations for the realization of speech acts, differentiation of registers, management of interpersonal relations, and stylistic effect; however, each language operates through distinct structural mechanisms that mirror their typological features. The English language prefers a delexicalized verb-noun construction with abstract nouns, taking advantage of the analytical structure and lexical variation for pragmatic signaling. On the other hand, the Uzbek language allows the use of complex predicates within the agglutinative morphological nature of the language, thus, being able to make pragmatic distinctions through the choice of the noun, which may include the historically layered lexical resources from Turkic, Persian, and Arabic origins.

The outcomes of the research proved that the linguistic means of the respective languages were the ones that caused the realization of the aforementioned pragmatic functions resulting in the need for language comparison and translation to be based on functions rather than form. By revealing the fact that different linguistic systems attain similar communicative goals, the understanding of these patterns contributes to contrastive linguistics, to translation studies in terms of pragmatic equivalence recognition, and to language pedagogy in terms of the conventionalized nature of collocations as the carriers of pragmatic meaning.

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