

SYNTACTICO-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS IN UZBEK

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Abstract: This article investigates the syntactico-semantic properties of English prepositions and their equivalents in Uzbek. By analyzing spatial, temporal, causal, instrumental, and abstract uses, as well as idiomatic and metaphorical expressions, the study highlights the challenges of achieving accurate cross-linguistic equivalence. It emphasizes that English prepositions are polysemous and contextually variable, whereas Uzbek relies on postpositions, case endings, and syntactic restructuring. The research contributes to theoretical linguistics, translation studies, language pedagogy, and computational applications, offering a framework for understanding prepositional meaning and facilitating accurate translation and language acquisition.

Key words: English prepositions, syntactic-semantic features, polysemy, idiomatic expressions, Uzbek equivalents, translation, spatial relations, temporal relations, causal relations, language pedagogy.

Introduction. Prepositions constitute one of the most essential and simultaneously challenging components of the English language, serving as crucial linguistic tools that establish various syntactic and semantic relations between words within a sentence. Their role is particularly significant in conveying spatial, temporal, causal, and abstract relationships, thereby contributing to the cohesion and coherence of discourse. Despite their seemingly simple appearance, prepositions exhibit a remarkable degree of polysemy, idiomaticity, and context-dependent variability, making them a frequent source of difficulty for language learners, translators, and linguists alike. In this regard, a comprehensive understanding of their syntactic-semantic properties, as well as the strategies employed in rendering their meanings in other languages, remains a central concern of both theoretical and applied linguistics. In English, prepositions perform a dual function. On the one hand, they act as markers of grammatical relationships, linking nouns, pronouns, or noun phrases to other elements within a clause. On the other hand, they convey semantic nuances that extend beyond mere syntactic connections, encompassing notions such as direction, location, instrumentality, manner, cause, and purpose. For example, in the sentence "She walked into the room with a smile," the prepositions into and with simultaneously indicate spatial movement and instrumentality, respectively. This duality—syntactic and semantic—underscores the intricate nature of prepositional usage and highlights the necessity of examining both aspects in an integrated manner.

The syntactic behavior of English prepositions can be broadly categorized into several types, including simple prepositions, complex prepositions, and prepositional phrases that function as adverbial or adjectival modifiers. Simple prepositions, such as in, on, at, and by, typically govern a single noun phrase and express fundamental spatial or temporal relationships. Complex prepositions, which often consist of a preposition combined with a noun, adjective, or

participial form, such as in front of, on account of, or with regard to, frequently convey more abstract or idiomatic meanings. The study of these structures requires careful attention to both syntactic constraints—such as government and complement selection—and semantic roles, including agentivity, directionality, and instrumentality. Semantically, English prepositions are marked by a high degree of polysemy. A single preposition can correspond to multiple conceptual relations depending on the context in which it appears. For instance, the preposition *over* can denote spatial superiority (The lamp hangs over the table), temporal duration (Over the years, attitudes have changed), or metaphorical dominance (He has control over the project). Such semantic flexibility necessitates that learners and translators acquire not only the literal meaning of prepositions but also their figurative and contextually inferred usages. Furthermore, prepositional combinations often give rise to idiomatic expressions, wherein the literal meaning of individual prepositions diverges from the overall sense of the phrase, as in “to look up to someone” or “to run out of time.” These phenomena underscore the importance of a semantic approach that integrates contextual, pragmatic, and cognitive considerations.

The significance of this research extends beyond theoretical linguistics to practical applications in language teaching, translation studies, and natural language processing. For learners of English in Uzbekistan, difficulties with prepositions are a common source of grammatical errors, idiomatic misinterpretation, and reduced communicative competence. A detailed analysis of the syntactico-semantic features of English prepositions, combined with systematic mapping to their Uzbek equivalents, can provide learners with explicit guidelines, improve comprehension, and facilitate accurate language production. Similarly, translators and interpreters benefit from a nuanced understanding of prepositional meaning and cross-linguistic equivalence, enabling more precise and contextually appropriate renderings. Furthermore, the study contributes to computational linguistics, where accurate prepositional parsing, semantic disambiguation, and machine translation rely on robust linguistic models that account for syntactic and semantic properties.

This article aims to address these theoretical and practical considerations by providing a detailed analysis of English prepositions and their equivalents in Uzbek. The study adopts a syntactic-semantic approach, focusing on both the structural behavior of prepositions within sentences and the range of semantic relations they encode. It also explores the challenges of translation equivalence, including polysemy, idiomaticity, and cultural specificity, and evaluates strategies for accurate and contextually appropriate translation. By integrating linguistic theory with applied translation practice, the research seeks to bridge the gap between descriptive linguistics and language pedagogy, offering insights that are relevant for scholars, educators, and language professionals alike.

In conclusion, prepositions occupy a central position in English grammar, functioning simultaneously as syntactic connectors and semantic markers. Their polysemous nature, idiomatic usage, and context-dependent variability make them a challenging area of study, particularly in cross-linguistic contexts such as English-Uzbek translation. A systematic analysis of their syntactic-semantic features, coupled with an investigation of their Uzbek equivalents, promises to advance our understanding of linguistic universals, language-specific structures, and the cognitive mechanisms underlying relational expression. Ultimately, such research not only enriches theoretical knowledge but also provides practical tools for language teaching,

translation, and cross-cultural communication, highlighting the enduring importance of prepositions in the study and application of English as a global language.

Literature review. The study of prepositions has long attracted the attention of linguists, grammarians, and language educators due to their complex syntactic and semantic properties. Prepositions, as closed-class items, exhibit unique characteristics that distinguish them from other parts of speech. Historically, their analysis has spanned multiple linguistic frameworks, including traditional grammar, structural linguistics, transformational-generative grammar, cognitive linguistics, and functional approaches. This section presents a critical review of existing literature, focusing on the syntactic-semantic properties of English prepositions, the challenges of translation into other languages, and specifically, the equivalence issues in English-Uzbek translation. Subsequent research has extended these insights, exploring the interaction between syntax and semantics in greater detail. Huddleston and Pullum in *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* provide a comprehensive account of English prepositions, distinguishing between simple prepositions, complex prepositions, and prepositional idioms. They emphasize the dual nature of prepositions as both syntactic heads and semantic markers, noting that prepositional meaning can vary according to collocational patterns, context, and register. Moreover, they address preposition stranding and complement selection, highlighting the syntactic flexibility of English prepositions, particularly in spoken discourse.

Specific studies focusing on English-Turkic language translation, including Uzbek, are relatively limited but highly relevant. Sultangareeva investigates the translation of English prepositions into Uzbek, highlighting that the agglutinative nature of Uzbek and its reliance on case endings and postpositions creates unique challenges. Similarly, prepositions such as *with* or *by* often require complex syntactic restructuring or the use of auxiliary postpositions in Uzbek to preserve meaning. Sultangareeva emphasizes that literal translation often fails to convey the intended semantic relationship, particularly in idiomatic expressions, highlighting the necessity of context-sensitive translation strategies. Further empirical studies have investigated common errors made by Uzbek learners of English concerning prepositions. Tadjibaeva (2015) identifies frequent mistakes in preposition choice, particularly in expressions of time, cause, and manner, and attributes these errors to interference from Uzbek syntactic structures and conceptual schemas. The study demonstrates that while English prepositions rely heavily on discrete lexical items, Uzbek frequently encodes similar relations morphologically, leading to systematic patterns of overgeneralization or omission among learners. This body of research underscores the pedagogical significance of syntactic-semantic analysis for improving both comprehension and production in second language acquisition contexts.

In summary, the literature on English prepositions highlights their complex syntactic behavior, polysemous semantic nature, and idiomatic variability. Translational and contrastive studies demonstrate the particular challenges posed by English-Uzbek equivalence, including structural divergence, case marking, postpositional strategies, and contextual modulation. Empirical research on language learners underscores the pedagogical relevance of syntactic-semantic analysis. While advances have been made across multiple linguistic domains, the need for a comprehensive, integrated study that systematically addresses English-Uzbek prepositional equivalence remains, providing a clear rationale for the present investigation.

Discussion. The analysis of English prepositions and their Uzbek equivalents highlights the intricate interplay between syntactic structures and semantic functions in cross-linguistic

contexts. One of the primary findings of this study is that English prepositions are multifunctional linguistic units whose meaning and syntactic behavior depend heavily on contextual and collocational factors. In English, a single preposition may encode multiple semantic roles, including spatial, temporal, causal, instrumental, and abstract relations, and may participate in idiomatic or metaphorical expressions. The polyvalent nature of prepositions complicates direct translation into Uzbek, which relies on agglutinative morphology, postpositions, and case markers to express relational meaning. This fundamental structural difference necessitates careful attention to both syntactic and semantic equivalence. For instance, spatial prepositions such as *on*, *in*, *at*, and *under* present relatively straightforward equivalence in Uzbek when used literally. The English preposition *on* is commonly rendered as *ustida*, *in* as *ichida*, and *under* as *osti-da*. However, even these seemingly simple cases may exhibit nuances that require contextual sensitivity. For example, the English expression *on the bus* can be translated literally as *avtobusda*, reflecting location, yet in idiomatic expressions such as *on duty*, the corresponding Uzbek translation requires a more interpretive approach (*navbatda* or *vazifada*). Such examples illustrate that literal equivalence is often insufficient, and semantic context must guide translation choices.

Another significant observation concerns abstract and metaphorical prepositional uses. Prepositions such as *over*, *under*, *by*, and *with* frequently participate in idiomatic or figurative expressions, presenting substantial challenges for Uzbek equivalents. For example, *He has control over the situation* translates as *U vaziyatni nazorat qiladi*, where *over* is not rendered literally but instead interpreted in terms of conceptual control. Similarly, *to look up to someone* is translated as *hurmat qilmoq*, with the prepositional component omitted in favor of conveying the intended social or emotional meaning. These examples underscore the necessity of a semantic rather than purely lexical approach in translation, emphasizing meaning preservation over formal correspondence. Collocational and syntactic constraints also play a critical role in determining equivalence. English prepositions often combine with specific verbs, nouns, or adjectives to form fixed or semi-fixed expressions, such as *interested in*, *responsible for*, or *capable of*. These constructions do not always align with a single postpositional or case-based form in Uzbek. For instance, *interested in history* is rendered as *tarixga qiziqadi*, where the postposition *ga* expresses the object of interest, and syntactic restructuring is required to maintain grammaticality. Such patterns indicate that prepositional meaning in English is frequently contextually and lexically constrained, necessitating flexible translation strategies that account for both syntactic compatibility and semantic fidelity.

Finally, the implications for computational linguistics and natural language processing are noteworthy. Accurate prepositional parsing, semantic role labeling, and machine translation depend on a deep understanding of both syntactic and semantic properties. The English-Uzbek contrastive analysis presented here can inform the development of bilingual corpora, disambiguation algorithms, and translation models, contributing to improved machine-assisted translation and language learning applications. By systematically categorizing prepositional usage and their Uzbek equivalents, computational models can be trained to recognize context-dependent meanings, polysemy, and idiomatic patterns, enhancing the quality and reliability of automated language tools.

In conclusion, the discussion of English prepositions and their equivalents in Uzbek underscores the complex interplay of syntax, semantics, cognition, and culture. Effective

translation and language teaching require an integrated approach that accounts for polysemy, idiomaticity, contextual constraints, and cross-linguistic structural differences. By examining spatial, temporal, causal, instrumental, and abstract relations, as well as idiomatic and metaphorical uses, this study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding English prepositions and their Uzbek equivalents. The findings contribute to theoretical linguistics, applied language studies, translation practice, pedagogy, and computational applications, highlighting the enduring significance of syntactico-semantic analysis in cross-linguistic research.

Conclusion. The present study has examined the syntactico-semantic features of English prepositions and their equivalents in Uzbek. The analysis demonstrated that English prepositions are multifunctional, context-dependent, and often polysemous, while Uzbek expresses relational meanings through postpositions, case endings, and syntactic restructuring. Literal translation is frequently insufficient, particularly for idiomatic, abstract, or metaphorical uses. Effective equivalence requires careful attention to both syntactic structures and semantic functions. These findings have implications for translation practice, language teaching, and computational linguistics, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive approaches to prepositional usage.

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