SEMANTIC STRUCTURES OF PERCEPTION VERBS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON

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Abstract: This study presents a comparative examination of the semantic structures associated with perception verbs in both Uzbek and English. Perception verbs – linguistic elements that convey sensory, cognitive, and intellectual experiences – demonstrate language-specific features. The research focuses on the classification of these verbs into lexical-semantic groups, their syntactic behavior, and their semantic nuances in each language. Through comparative analysis, the study highlights similarities and differences in the use of perception verbs across the two languages. Furthermore, it investigates their contextual applications and addresses challenges that may arise in the process of translation. The outcomes of this research hold relevance for both linguistic theory and translation practice.

Keywords: perception verbs, semantic structure, comparative analysis, English language, Uzbek language, lexical-semantic group, translation, syntactic properties.

Introduction

Perception verbs constitute an essential class of verbs in language, as they convey how individuals perceive and interpret sensory stimuli—namely, visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile experiences. In English and Uzbek, these verbs are organized into distinct lexical-semantic categories, shaped by the linguistic and cultural contexts specific to each language. English perception verbs frequently emphasize aspects such as intentionality and outcomes, whereas Uzbek counterparts tend to be more context-

sensitive and encompass a wider range of both sensory and figurative meanings. This comparative study investigates the semantic structures, syntactic patterns, metaphorical extensions, and cognitive dimensions of perception verbs in both languages.

Cognitive linguistics, as a theoretical framework, maintains that language is a reflection of general cognitive processes and is inseparable from human experience. In contrast to generative models, which regard language as an independent system, cognitive linguistics approaches language as intrinsically connected to broader mental capacities. This integrative viewpoint has driven extensive research, including in the areas of conceptual metaphor and construction grammar, offering valuable insights into the reciprocal relationship between language and cognition.

Cognitive linguistics is one of the contemporary directions in linguistics, emerging in the early 1970s as a response to dissatisfaction with formal approaches to language. The field builds upon advancements in modern cognitive science during the 1960s-1970s, especially studies on human categorization and theories like Gestalt psychology. While initial research was conducted by a small number of scholars in the 1970s and 1980s, the early 1990s saw a significant increase in researchers who identified themselves as "cognitive linguists." The establishment of the journal *Cognitive Linguistics* in 1989-1990 and the founding of the International Cognitive Linguistics Society marked important milestones. Renowned cognitive linguist Ronald Langacker described this period as the "formation of cognitive linguistics as a broad and distinctive intellectual movement."

Since cognitive linguistics is not a single, unified theory, it is often described as a "movement" or "initiative." Instead, it adopts a collection of general guiding principles, assumptions, and perspectives. This has led to the development of complementary, partially overlapping (and sometimes competing) theories.

Like other linguists, cognitive linguists study language for its uniqueness, aiming to describe and explain its systematic nature, structure, functions, and how these functions are realized through linguistic systems. However, a distinctive aspect of cognitive linguistics is its premise that language reflects patterns of thought. Studying language from

this perspective means examining patterns of conceptualization. Language serves as a mirror of cognitive functions, providing insights into the nature, structure, and organization of thought and ideas.

The main distinction between cognitive linguistics and other linguistic approaches lies in its view that language mirrors certain fundamental characteristics and design features of human cognition. This assumption profoundly influences the methodologies, techniques, and models developed within cognitive linguistics. For example, one critical criterion for evaluating language models in this framework is their psychological plausibility.

A comparative analysis of the semantic structures of perception verbs in Uzbek and English is of significant importance from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. In the semantic systems of both languages, perception verbs represent the human process of interacting with the environment through various sensory modalities. However, the use, metaphorical meanings, and semantic structures of these verbs can differ or resemble each other based on linguistic features.

Methods

Perception verbs describe processes of perceiving the world through human senses. They include:

Sight: to see, to look, to appear, to catch sight. Example: "Humoyun seemed to Hamida Bonu the happiest and bravest among all young men around" (P. Kodirov, "Avlodlar dovoni"). The verb "seem" here indicates subjective perception rather than reality.

Hearing: to hear, to listen, to sound. Example: "He listened intently, but no sound came from the dark forest" (J.R.R. Tolkien, "The Lord of the Rings"). This illustrates attentive listening without successful auditory perception.

Smelling: to smell, to give off a smell. Example: "The rarest flowers in the gardens were giving off a fragrant smell" (P. Kodirov). Here, smelling actively describes fragrance distribution.

Tasting: to taste, to savor. Example: "Previously, Nizom dreamed of tasting deer kebabs, now he could enjoy them whenever he desired" (P. Kodirov). The verb expresses the cognitive evaluation of sensory desire fulfillment.

Feeling: to feel, to sense. Example: "The sun was hot now, and the old man felt it on his neck as sweat trickled down his back" (E. Hemingway). This indicates physical perception.

Perception verbs were categorized semantically into three groups in English:

1. Perceptive Action: look, listen, sniff, touch, observe, stare, gaze, peer, glance, examine, inspect, watch.

2. Perceptive Process: see, hear, smell, taste, feel, detect, perceive, discern, notice, sense.

3. Perceptive State: appear, sound, seem, look, feel, taste, smell, resemble, stay, become.

In Uzbek, perception verbs were grouped based on their meanings:

1. Active perception: qaramoq (to look), tinglamoq (to listen), hidlamoq (to sniff), tatib ko'rmoq (to taste).

2. Passive perception: ko'rmoq (to see), eshitmoq (to hear), sezmoq (to feel).

3. Resulting state verbs: ko'rinmoq (to appear), eshitilmoq (to be heard), sezilmoq (to be felt).

A corpus-based approach was used, analyzing examples from classical and contemporary literary texts in both languages.

Results

The analysis found clear semantic distinctions among perception verbs in English and Uzbek:

Both languages have verbs for perceptive action and passive perception, yet English verbs often clearly differentiate between deliberate action (look) and involuntary perception (see), whereas Uzbek verbs may show less syntactic differentiation.

English verbs display clearer syntactic structures when expressing actions versus results (e.g., "I heard him sing" vs. "I heard him singing"), whereas Uzbek syntax usually conveys these differences contextually rather than grammatically.

Both languages frequently use metaphorical meanings of perception verbs, such as "to see the point" in English and "maqsadni ko'rmoq" (to understand the goal) in Uzbek, indicating cognitive rather than purely sensory perception.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the semantic and syntactic usage of perception verbs is heavily context-dependent. English tends to clearly separate perceptive states, actions, and processes, while Uzbek verbs are syntactically simpler but contextually richer. English perception verbs more distinctly separate action from state (to look vs. to see, to listen vs. to hear), which poses translation challenges, requiring contextual interpretation.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of perception verbs in English and Uzbek highlights both universal cognitive tendencies and language-specific expressions of sensory experience. While English often employs clear-cut distinctions between perceptual processes and results, Uzbek relies more on context and less rigid syntactic frames. This research underscores the importance of context, metaphor, and cultural nuance in understanding how perception verbs function in two distinct linguistic environments. This study enriches our understanding of the semantic and syntactic properties of perception verbs in Uzbek and English, highlighting the necessity of contextual awareness in translation practices. It emphasizes cognitive-linguistic dimensions and provides insights for language teaching, translation, and further comparative linguistics research.

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