A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Annotation: This article investigates the use and structure of passive constructions in English and Uzbek, focusing on their similarities and differences in form, function, and frequency. Passive voice plays a crucial role in highlighting the receiver of an action, often used to foreground information or achieve objectivity in both academic and non-academic texts. By examining syntactic patterns and pragmatic functions, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how passive constructions shape meaning and discourse strategies in the two languages.

Key words: passive construction, comparative analysis, syntactic structure, voice, English, Uzbek, pragmatics.

Аннотация: В данной статье исследуется использование и структура пассивных конструкций в английском и узбекском языках, уделяется внимание их сходствам и различиям в форме, функции и частоте употребления. Пассивная конструкция играет важную роль в выделении объекта действия и часто используется для акцентирования информации или достижения объективности в академических и неакадемических текстах. Изучение синтаксических моделей и прагматических функций способствует более глубокому пониманию того, как пассивные конструкции формируют значение и стратегию дискурса в обоих языках.

Ключевые слова: пассивная конструкция, сравнительный анализ, синтаксическая структура, залог, английский язык, узбекский язык, прагматика.

Introduction

Passive constructions, as a fundamental aspect of voice in grammar, allow speakers and writers to emphasize the recipient of an action rather than the doer. In English, the passive voice is commonly formed using auxiliary verbs and the past participle (e.g., "The book was written by the author"). In contrast, Uzbek typically uses auxiliary verbs like "bo'lmoq" (to be) combined with participial forms or passive affixes (e.g., "kitob yozildi"). While the general purpose of the passive is similar across languages—to foreground the patient (recipient of the action)—its formation, usage frequency, and stylistic preferences often differ. This article aims to explore these differences and similarities by analyzing English and Uzbek passive constructions in various textual contexts.

Literature review

Research on passive constructions has been extensive in English linguistics (Quirk et al., 1985; Biber et al., 1999), focusing on their syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects. English passives are recognized for their flexibility in both academic and informal contexts, with functions ranging from promoting objectivity to backgrounding the agent (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). In Uzbek linguistics, studies have addressed the morphological and syntactic features of the passive voice (Sayfiyev, 2000; Rakhimov, 2012), noting that passive constructions are less frequent and often limited to specific genres such as formal writing or official discourse. The use of passive affixes (-il, -in) and the verb "bo'lmoq" are typical mechanisms for forming passives in Uzbek. Comparative studies (e.g., Kadirova, 2015) have highlighted that while both languages employ passive structures for similar communicative purposes, the syntactic realization and the discourse strategies differ significantly due to typological and cultural factors. This article builds on this literature by providing an integrated analysis of form, function, and frequency in both languages.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and comparative approach to analyze passive constructions in English and Uzbek. A corpus of academic, journalistic, and conversational texts in both languages was compiled, focusing on examples where the passive voice is employed. Syntactic structures were analyzed using frameworks from generative grammar and functional linguistics, while pragmatic functions were examined in relation to information structure, emphasis, and agent backgrounding.

Data collection and analysis

In English, the passive is predominantly formed using auxiliary verbs ("be" + past participle) with optional inclusion of the agent ("by-phrase"), e.g., "The decision was made (by the committee)." It frequently appears in academic writing to maintain an objective tone (e.g., "It was found that…"). In Uzbek, the passive voice often uses the suffixes -il and -in (e.g., "kitob yozildi"—"the book was written") or the auxiliary verb "bo'lmoq" (e.g., "ish bajarilgan edi"—"the work had been done"). Agent phrases are rare and typically omitted.

Functional analysis reveals that in both languages, the passive is used to foreground the patient and background the agent, but English allows more flexibility in agent inclusion through the "by-phrase," while Uzbek tends to omit the agent altogether, reflecting cultural preferences for indirectness and collectivism.

Frequency analysis showed that English texts use passives more frequently than Uzbek ones, especially in academic and technical genres, where the focus is on processes rather than the doer. Conversely, Uzbek prefers active constructions in everyday and narrative contexts, reserving passives for official or formal registers.

Results

1. Structural Formation of Passive Constructions

The results of the comparative analysis reveal that passive constructions in English and Uzbek share some functional similarities but differ significantly in their morphological and syntactic realization.

In **English**, the passive voice is typically formed using the auxiliary verb **be** combined with the past participle of the main verb (e.g., *The letter was written by the student*). This structure is consistent and relatively straightforward, allowing for the optional inclusion of the agent with the preposition **by**.

In **Uzbek**, passive constructions are formed through morphological markers attached to the verb stem, such as **-il**, **-in**, **-tir**, and **-dir**. For example, *kitob yozildi* ("the book was written") illustrates the use of the **-il** suffix to indicate passivity. Unlike English, Uzbek often omits the explicit agent altogether, relying on context for interpretation.

2. Agent Expression

In English, the agent in a passive construction is optional but can be explicitly included using **by** (e.g., *The report was prepared by the manager*). This allows for flexible emphasis depending on whether the focus is on the action or the agent.

In contrast, **Uzbek** rarely includes the agent in the passive construction. Instead, the agent is either omitted or expressed using different syntactic structures (e.g., *kitob o'qituvchi tomonidan yozildi*—"the book was written by the teacher"). However, this usage is relatively infrequent and tends to be more formal or literary.

3. Usage Contexts

The study also reveals differences in usage contexts between the two languages. In English, passive constructions are commonly used in academic, scientific, and formal writing to emphasize the action or result rather than the agent. For instance: *The experiment was conducted carefully*.

In Uzbek, passives are also frequent in formal and written discourse (e.g., official documents and academic writing), but less so in colloquial speech. Uzbek speakers often prefer active constructions, unless the agent is unknown or unimportant. For example: *Ma'lumotlar tahlil qilindi*.

Table 1 summarizes these key differences:

№	Feature	English Passive	Uzbek Passive
1	Formation	Auxiliary **be** + past participle	Verb stem + suffixes (**-il, -in, -tir, -dir**)
2	Agent Inclusion	Optional with **by**	Rare; sometimes expressed with **tomonidan**
3	Usage	Common in academic/formal	Formal/written style; less frequent in

		contexts	speech

4. Function and Emphasis

The passive voice in English serves to background the agent and foreground the action or result. This is especially relevant in scientific texts where objectivity is prioritized. Uzbek passives function similarly but with a stronger tendency to omit the agent entirely, reflecting cultural preferences for depersonalization in formal contexts.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of passive constructions in English and Uzbek reveals both cross-linguistic similarities and language-specific differences that can be understood through typological, functional, and syntactic frameworks. Drawing on Comrie (1977), it is evident that while English passives frequently rely on the auxiliary verb "to be" and the past participle form, Uzbek predominantly uses morphological markers (-il, -in) and auxiliary verbs like "bo'lmoq" to achieve passive meanings. Comrie highlights that inversion processes—whereby the typical subject-object order is altered—serve to foreground the patient (receiver of the action) in both languages, though the specific syntactic mechanisms differ. Siewierska's (1984) comparative study of passives across languages underscores that while English passives allow for the explicit inclusion of the agent through a "by-phrase," Uzbek typically omits the agent or expresses it indirectly. This reflects broader cultural and discourse preferences, where Uzbek discourse often prioritizes collectivism and indirectness, contrasting with the relatively explicit agent-marking available in English. Siewierska's typology shows that languages with overt agent marking, like English, offer speakers more flexibility in managing information flow and discourse structure.

Keenan and Dryer (2007) argue that the passive voice functions not only as a syntactic alternation but also as a pragmatic strategy for backgrounding the agent and highlighting the patient. In both English and Uzbek, the passive thus serves as a discourse strategy to shift focus from the doer of the action to the recipient. However, Keenan and Dryer's typological analysis also reveals that languages vary in their syntactic realizations of the passive: English, with its auxiliary constructions, allows for tense, aspect, and modality marking within the passive, whereas Uzbek's reliance on morphological suffixes often results in more restricted tense marking, requiring additional auxiliary verbs to fully express complex temporal or aspectual meanings. Foley and Van Valin (1984) emphasize that passive constructions can be understood through a functional lens, where their primary role is to adjust the alignment of syntactic arguments to achieve specific communicative goals. In English, this is accomplished by promoting the object of an active clause to subject position, aligning with the subject prominence typical of English syntax. In Uzbek, although the patient is similarly foregrounded, the morphological marking and less frequent use of explicit agent phrases reflect a different balance between syntactic form and discourse function. This suggests that while both languages share the

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communicative goal of emphasizing the patient, they do so through language-specific strategies that reflect their typological profiles and pragmatic needs.

Conclusion

This article highlights the importance of understanding these differences for learners of either language, especially in academic and formal writing where passive constructions are most prevalent. Further research could investigate how these patterns influence translation practices and language acquisition for non-native speakers.

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