ISSN:2828-6235
Impact factor:13.77

International Journal of Literature and Language Studies(IJLLS)

GRAMMATICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN TRANSLATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Umidaxon Aslamova,
Bachelor Student, Faculty of English Philology and Translation Studies (Ingliz Filologiyasi va Tarjimashunoslik Fakulteti), Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, Samarkand, Uzbekistan
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23433248

Abstract: Grammatical transformations are an essential part of translation because languages often express the same meaning through different grammatical structures. This article examines the use of grammatical transformations in English–Uzbek translation, focusing on word order, articles, tense and aspect, voice, and sentence structure. Using a comparative and descriptive approach, it explains how differences between English and Uzbek influence translators' choices. Illustrative examples demonstrate how changes in grammatical form can preserve meaning and make translations more natural for Uzbek readers. The discussion also considers common problems, including literal translation, unnecessary additions, and the loss of emphasis or temporal meaning. The article concludes that effective grammatical transformation requires a strong understanding of both languages, attention to context, and careful revision of the target text.
Keywords: grammatical transformations, English–Uzbek translation, translation equivalence, word order, tense and aspect, grammatical voice, articles, sentence structure, transposition, translation strategies.

Introduction:

Translation is more than replacing words in one language with their equivalents in another. A translator must also understand how each language organises information, expresses relationships, and builds sentences. Even when the vocabulary is clear, grammatical differences can make a direct translation sound unnatural or change the original meaning. This is particularly noticeable in English–Uzbek translation, where the two languages differ in their typical word order, use of articles, verb structures, and ways of expressing grammatical relationships.

English generally follows a Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) pattern in statements, while Uzbek commonly uses Subject–Object–Verb (SOV) order. English also uses articles and auxiliary verbs extensively, whereas Uzbek relies more heavily on suffixes, context, and other grammatical structures. These differences do not mean that one language is more complicated than the other; rather, they show that languages organise meaning in different ways.

Catford (1965) discusses translation shifts as changes between linguistic structures in the source and target languages. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) likewise describe procedures such as transposition and modulation that help translators move beyond direct structural correspondence. In English–Uzbek translation, these approaches are useful because a grammatically faithful translation may need to change the form of the original to preserve its meaning. The purpose of this article is to examine common grammatical transformations between English and Uzbek, explain their practical use through examples, and identify strategies that can improve translation quality.

The Concept of Grammatical Transformation:

Grammatical transformation refers to changing the grammatical form or structure of a source-language expression when translating it into the target language. Such changes may involve word order, parts of speech, verb forms, voice, sentence boundaries, or the omission and addition of grammatical elements. The goal is not to change the message but to express it according to the grammatical and stylistic conventions of the target language. Several transformations are

particularly relevant to English–Uzbek translation. Transposition involves changing the grammatical arrangement of words or phrases. Substitution replaces one grammatical structure with another that performs a similar function. Omission removes an element that does not need an explicit equivalent in the target language, while addition makes information grammatically or contextually necessary for a natural translation more explicit. Sentence division and integration can also help translators manage differences in sentence length and complexity (Newmark, 1988; Baker, 2018). These procedures should not be applied mechanically. A translator must first identify the meaning and function of a grammatical structure in context. As Munday et al. (2022) explain in their overview of translation theories, translation decisions are influenced by linguistic choices as well as communicative purpose and the relationship between source and target texts.

Word Order and Syntactic Transposition:

Example 1

English: The student read the book.

Uzbek: Talaba kitobni o‘qidi.

The English sentence follows the SVO pattern, while the Uzbek translation follows SOV order. The object the book becomes kitobni and appears before the verb o‘qidi. This change is not a loss of meaning; it is a normal grammatical adjustment. Keeping the English word order in Uzbek would sound unnatural in an ordinary declarative sentence. The example demonstrates that grammatical equivalence depends on preserving relationships between sentence elements, not on keeping their original positions. Word order can also influence emphasis. English sometimes uses fronting or inversion to highlight a particular element, while Uzbek may express a similar emphasis through word placement, particles, or the surrounding context. A translator should therefore distinguish between ordinary grammatical rearrangement and a deliberate stylistic choice. If emphasis is important to the author’s purpose, the translation should preserve it where possible.

Articles and the Expression of Definiteness

Example 2

English: A teacher entered the room.

Possible Uzbek translation: Xonaga bir o‘qituvchi kirdi.

In this context, bir can help convey the introduction of an unspecified teacher, although it is not a compulsory equivalent of the English indefinite article in every sentence. The word the does not need a separate translation because the reference to the room can be understood from the sentence and context. A translator who adds bir to every English noun preceded by a or an may produce awkward or misleading Uzbek. Similarly, translating the with bu or o‘sha in every case would introduce a demonstrative meaning that the original may not contain. The appropriate choice depends on whether the referent is new, already known, or otherwise identifiable to the reader.

This example illustrates why grammatical transformation requires attention to discourse, not only sentence structure. Article meanings can be conveyed implicitly, so omission may be the most accurate choice in some contexts. In others, a demonstrative or numeral may be necessary to avoid ambiguity (Baker, 2018).

Tense and Aspect Transformation

Example 3

English: I have lived here for five years.

Uzbek: Men bu yerda besh yildan beri yashayman.

The English present perfect connects a past starting point with the present situation. In Uzbek, the expression besh yildan beri conveys the duration, while yashayman expresses the continuing state. A word-for-word attempt to reproduce the English verb structure would not be the most natural solution. The Uzbek translation distributes the temporal meaning across the duration phrase and the verb. This is an example of functional equivalence: the grammatical form changes, but the intended time relationship remains clear. Tense transformations become more difficult when

context determines whether an English form describes a completed event, a continuing situation, or a repeated activity. Toreniyazov's (2025) comparison of English and Uzbek tense systems similarly highlights differences in how the languages organise tense and aspect. Translators should therefore interpret the whole sentence and its surrounding context before choosing a target-language verb form.

Active and Passive Voice

Example 4

English: The decision was announced yesterday.

Uzbek: Qaror kecha e'lon qilindi.

In this case, the passive structure can be retained naturally in Uzbek. The sentence focuses on the decision and the act of announcing it rather than identifying the person responsible. The translation preserves that focus while adjusting the verb to Uzbek grammatical conventions. This example also shows that transformation does not always require a dramatic change: sometimes the two languages offer structures with similar functions. Consider a different sentence: The novel was written by Abdulla Qodiriy. Depending on the surrounding text, an Uzbek translation may retain the passive structure or use an active construction such as Abdulla Qodiriy roman yozgan. The active version places greater emphasis on the author, so it is not automatically interchangeable with the passive. The translator must consider whether the agent is already known, whether it is important, and what the sentence is intended to emphasise. As Catford (1965) and Newmark (1988) suggest in their broader discussions of translation procedures, structural changes must be evaluated in relation to meaning and communicative function.

Common Problems and Practical Solutions:

One common problem is excessive literalism. Translators may preserve the source-language order or reproduce each grammatical element even when the result sounds unnatural in Uzbek. This often happens when a translator focuses on the form of a sentence before identifying its function. A useful solution is to translate the meaning first and then revise the sentence according to target-language grammar. A second problem is changing more than necessary. Grammatical transformation is not permission to rewrite the author's message freely. Omitting a repeated subject may be appropriate, but removing a time expression or changing the agent of an action can alter the information. Every change should therefore be checked against the source text. A third problem involves register. The grammar of an academic article, a news report, a legal document, and a conversation may require different choices. A structure that works in informal Uzbek may not be suitable for a formal report. Translators should identify the genre, audience, and communicative purpose before selecting a transformation.

Several practical strategies can improve results. First, translators should conduct a contrastive analysis of the relevant grammatical structures before beginning a difficult assignment. Second, they should consult reliable grammars, bilingual dictionaries, and parallel texts, while checking whether examples belong to the same context and register. Third, reading the target text aloud or asking another translator to review it can help reveal unnatural structures. Finally, translators should compare the final translation with the source to ensure that changes in form have not caused changes in meaning. Research on English–Uzbek translation also emphasises the role of systematic transformation in achieving linguistic and cultural accuracy (Makhmudjonova, 2024). Recent work on English-language materials translated into Uzbek discusses omission, addition, substitution, and sentence restructuring as practical procedures for handling grammatical differences (Turdieva, 2026). These approaches support a central principle: a successful transformation should be judged by the accuracy, clarity, and naturalness of the resulting text rather than by the number of words or structures retained from the original.

Conclusion:

Grammatical transformations are an essential part of effective English–Uzbek translation because the two languages frequently express similar meanings through different structures. Word order, articles, tense and aspect, voice, and sentence construction all require translators to make context-sensitive decisions. The examples in this article show that a grammatical form may need to change even when the meaning must remain stable. The most effective approach combines knowledge of both grammatical systems with careful attention to context, genre, emphasis, and reader expectations. Translators should avoid both mechanical literalism and unnecessary rewriting, using transformations only when they improve accuracy or naturalness.

References:

1. Baker, M. (2018). In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation (3rd ed.). Routledge.
2. Buranov, J. B., & Khoshimov, O. Kh. (1974). English Grammar. O‘qituvchi.
3. Catford, J. C. (1965). A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics. Oxford University Press.
4. Hatim, B., & Munday, J. (2004). Translation: An Advanced Resource Book. Routledge.
5. Makhmudjonova, Y. (2024). The role of grammatical transformation in translation: A focus on English–Uzbek examples. Foreign Linguistics and Linguodidactics, 2(3), 192–195. https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-3701-vol2-iss3-pp192-195
6. Munday, J., Ramos Pinto, S., & Blakesley, J. (2022). Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications (5th ed.). Routledge.
7. Newmark, P. (1988). A Textbook of Translation. Prentice Hall.
8. Nida, E. A. (1964). Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating. E. J. Brill.
9. Salomov, G. (1983). Tarjima nazariyasi asoslari [Foundations of translation theory]. O‘qituvchi.
10. Toreniyazov, N. (2025). The analysis of the tense system in English and Uzbek languages. Eurasian Journal of Academic Research, 5(9), 158–161.
11. Turdieva, G. (2026). Translation characteristics and peculiarities of grammatical transformations in English materials with the examples. Analysis of Modern Science and Innovation, 3(5).