

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF TONGUE TWISTERS IN
ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

Isakova Elvina Dilaverovna

Presidential School in Termez

Abstract. *This article presents a structural analysis of tongue twisters in the English and Uzbek languages. Tongue twisters are examined as stable oral texts characterized by specific phonetic, lexical, and syntactic patterns. The study aims to identify the structural components of tongue twisters and to compare their organization in two typologically different languages. The findings reveal both universal structural features and language-specific patterns determined by phonological systems and grammatical structures. The research contributes to contrastive linguistics, phonostylistics, and folklore studies.*

Keywords: *tongue twisters, structural analysis, English language, Uzbek language, phonetic structure, oral folklore.*

The grammatical foundation of a sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. The structural classification of any sentence is determined by its grammatical basis. Depending on the presence of the subject and predicate, sentences are structurally divided into simple and compound sentences.

A simple sentence is a grammatically and intonationally complete syntactic unit that conveys a specific meaning or purpose. Based on their structure, simple sentences can be either concise or expanded.¹

¹ Ўзбек тили грамматикаси. II том. Синтаксис [Масъул муҳаррирлар: Г^а.А.Абдурахмонов ва бошқ.]. – Тошкент: Фан, 1976. – Б.98.

A concise sentence consists only of the primary components (subject and predicate). An expanded sentence includes secondary components in addition to the main ones.

Tongue twisters containing secondary components along with the primary sentence parts belong to the expanded simple sentence category. Below are examples in the Uzbek and English languages:

Uzbek:

To‘qmoq to‘qmoqni to‘qmoqladi.

Subject: To‘qmoq

Predicate: To‘qmoqladi

Object: To‘qmoqni

English:

She sells sea shells.

Subject: She

Predicate: Sells

Object: Sea shells

In both languages, sentences can be classified as complete or incomplete depending on whether all necessary sentence components are present or if some elements are omitted in the syntactic structure.

Most collected tongue twisters fall into the category of complete sentences.

Examples:

Uzbek: *Yomg‘ir yog‘di, yer yumshadi* (The rain fell, the ground softened); English: *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.* Uzbek: *To‘qmoq to‘qmoqni to‘qmoqladi* (A mallet pounded another mallet); English: *Cats catch quick rats.*

According to “The Grammar of the Uzbek Language” (“O‘zbek tili grammatikasi”), incomplete sentences are classified into four types:

1. Incomplete sentences in dialogic speeches (used in conversations).
2. Independent incomplete sentences (standalone phrases).
3. Incomplete sentences in the form of phraseological units (set phrases).
4. Incomplete sentences within compound sentences (subordinate clauses)².

Some tongue twisters belong to independent incomplete sentences, such as *Oq ot oq o‘t oldida* (A white horse is in front of white grass), *Oq lo‘li o‘roq olar o‘roq bilan* (A white gypsy takes a sickle with a sickle) in Uzbek, and *I slit a sheet, a sheet I slit, and on that slitted sheet I sit* in English.

The number of tongue twisters in the form of complex sentences analyzed in the research work is the large in both English and Uzbek. A complex sentence is a unique structural-semantic unit in syntax, formed by the combination of two, three or more predicative units. The bonding characteristics of these components vary depending on their quantity. nature of this combination varies depending on the number and type of clauses involved. The types of complex sentences are determined based on two-component complex sentences.³

In Uzbek linguistics, compound sentences are classified based on their connection types into: 1) coordinated compound sentences (where clauses have equal status); 2) asyndetic compound sentences (joined only by intonation,

² Ўзбек тили грамматикаси. II том. Синтаксис [Масъул муҳаррирлар: Ғ.А.Абдурахмонов ва бошқ.]. – Тошкент: Фан, 1976. – Б.198-201.

³ Ғуломов А., Асқарова М. Ҳозирги ўзбек адабий тили: Синтаксис: ун-т ва пед. ин-т филол. фак. учун дарслик / (Махсус ред.: Ш.Рахматуллаев). – 3-қайта ишланган ва тўлд-ган нашр. – Тошкент: Ўқитувчи, 1987. – Б. 160.

without conjunctions); 3) subordinate compound sentences (one clause depends on another).

Coordinated compound sentences are equally connected and can express different semantic relations, including addition (cumulative meaning), contrast (opposition) alternative (choices), comparison and explanation, cause-effect relationships and time relationships.

In Uzbek, tongue twisters in the form of coordinated compound sentences are connected using conjunctions such as *va* (and), *ammo* (but), *yoki* (or), *go'yo* (as if), *hatto* (even), *lekin* (however). In English, similar structures use conjunctions like *and*, *but*, *also*, *yet*, *whether*, *or*, *whatever*.

Uzbek: *Juda qattiq qarsilladi, va qozon qopqog'i uchib ketdi* (There was a loud crack, and the pot lid flew off). English: *If a dog chews shoes, whose shoes does he choose?* Uzbek: *Qop-qora qozonda qaynoq sho'rva, ammo qozon qoraymagan* (In the pitch-black pot, there was boiling soup, but the pot had not turned black). English: *The great Greek grape growers grow great Greek grapes because great Greek grapes make great Greek grape juice.*

According to Uzbek linguists, "Asyndetic compound sentences are not simply an alternative version of compound or complex sentences without conjunctions but rather a distinct type of compound sentence.

Asyndetic compound sentences are categorized into three types: 1) sentences expressing a time relationship, 2) sentences expressing a comparison relationship, 3) sentences expressing an explanatory relationship⁴".

In both languages, in Uzbek and English, the components of asyndetic compound sentences are in a semantic-syntactic relationship.

⁴ Ўзбек тили грамматикаси. II том. Синтаксис [Масъул муҳаррирлар: Ғ.А.Абдурахмонов ва бошқ.]. – Тошкент: Фан, 1976. – Б. 300-301.

Uzbek: *O'rik yig', do'lane sol, o'rik suvda cho'kdi, do'lane tepada.*
(Pick apricots, put in hawthorn, the apricot sank in water, the hawthorn floated.)

English: *The fox frolicked in the forest, finding five fragrant flowers.*

The fox frolicked in the forest The repetition of the “f” sound in *fox*, *frolicked*, and *forest* emphasizes the fox’s playful movement. *Finding five fragrant flowers* — The “f” sound continues in *finding*, *five*, and *fragrant flowers*, maintaining rhythm and linking the two parts.

Uzbek: *Yomg'ir yog'di, yer yumshadi.* (It rained, the ground softened.)

The rabbit rushed past the rose bush, right near the red poppies. The “r” sound in *rabbit*, *rushed*, and *rose* makes the tongue twister feel fast and urgent, mimicking the rabbit’s speed. The “r” sound continues in *right*, *red*, and *roses*, enhancing the sense of proximity and quickness reinforcing the sense of movement.

Uzbek: *Qora qozon qizil qozonga qaradi, qizil qozon qora qozonga qaradi.* (The black pot looked at the red pot, the red pot looked at the black pot.)

A deer darted through the daisies, dodging the dry dandelions. The “d” sound in *deer*, *darted*, and *daisies* which come in the first part of tongue twister gives a feeling of swift and nimble movement. The repetition of the “d” sound continues, emphasizing the deer’s agility in avoiding obstacles.

There are various classifications of subordinate compound sentences based on their connection to simple sentences. This approach has been

examined in the scientific works of such scholars as V.I.Zhelvis, B.A.Ilyish, L.L.Iofik, I.P.Verkhovskaya, Y.G.Birenbaum, and N.A.Busheva⁵.

The classification of subordinate clauses in the Uzbek language is generally close to the classification of subordinate clauses in other languages. This is not a coincidence, since the theory of subordinate clauses in Turkic languages, as well as in other languages, is closely connected with the theory of simple sentences⁶.

In American and British linguistic schools, the classification of subordinate clauses has emerged based on which word (part of speech) in a simple sentence noun, adjective, or adverb they replace. According to their similarity to simple sentence components, subordinate clauses are categorized into the following types: substantive (nominal clauses), adjective (attributive clauses), adverbial (adverbial clauses)⁷.

Thus, if in English linguistics the problem of complex sentences is related to the classification of subordinate clauses, then in Turkology it is associated with the different interpretations of the nature of phrases formed in the form of participles, adverbial participles (converbs), and verbal nouns. The tongue twisters we are considering are divided into the following types of subordinate clauses:

In Uzbek: *Qachonki Qobil qovun qarsillatib yesa, qaldirg'ochlar qiziqib qaraydi* (When Qobil eats the melon crunchily, the swallows curiously watch).
Qachonki Qobil qovun qarsillatib yesa/ When Qobil eats the melon crunchily

⁵ Уралова О. П. Инглиз ва ўзбек тилларида «оиладан» бош лексемали мақоллар семантикаси ва структураси. Филол. фанлари фалсафа д-ри... дисс.– Самарқанд, 2021. – 144 б

⁶ Менглиев Б. Ўзбек тилидан универсал қўлланма / Б.Менглиев, Ў.Холиёров, Н.Абдурахмонова: маъсул муҳаррир Б.Бахриддинова. – Қайта нашр. – Тошкент: Академнашр, 2015. – 512 б.

⁷ Дандис А. О структуре пословицы // Паремииологический сборник. – М.: Наука, 1978. – С. 13–34.

– indicates the time of the swallows’ watching. – time clause; *Agar Anvar anor aravaga artsa, ariq atrofida ari aylanadi.* (If Anvar rubs a pomegranate on the cart, a bee flies around the canal.) *Agar Anvar anor aravaga artsa/ If Anvar rubs a pomegranate on the cart* – specifies the condition under which the bee flies. – conditional clause; *Baxor bodring boshogqa bog‘langani bois, bolalar bog‘da bobosiga borishdi.* (Since the cucumber was tied to the ear of grain in spring, the children went to their grandfather in the garden.) *Baxor bodring boshogqa bog‘langani bois* – indicates the reason why the children went to their grandfather. – causal clause.

In English: *She sells seashells by the seashore. The shells she sells are surely seashells. So if she sells shells on the seashore, I’m sure she sells seashore shells.* Main Clause: She sells seashells by the seashore. She → Subject (pronoun). sells → Predicate (simple present tense). seashells → Direct Object (noun). by the seashore → Prepositional Phrase (indicating location). by → Preposition. the seashore → Noun phrase (indicating the location where the action takes place). Simple sentence (subject-predicate-object structure). Second Sentence: The shells she sells are surely seashells. Main Clause: The shells are surely seashells. Relative Clause: she sells (modifies the shells). Breakdown: The shells → Subject (noun phrase). she sells → Relative Clause modifying the shells. she → Subject (pronoun). sells → Predicate (simple present tense). are → Predicate (linking predicate). surely → Adpredicate modifying the predicate are, expressing certainty. seashells → Predicate nominative (the subject complement, renaming the shells). Third Sentence: So if she sells shells on the seashore. Structure: Main Clause (Implied): I’m sure (not explicitly stated here but implied in the context). Subordinate Clause: if she sells shells on the seashore (conditional clause). So → Coordinating

Conjunction (introduces a consequence or conclusion). if → Subordinating Conjunction (introduces the conditional clause). she → Subject (pronoun). sells → Predicate (simple present tense). shells → Direct Object (noun). on the seashore → Prepositional Phrase (indicating location). on → Preposition. the seashore → Noun phrase (location). Fourth Sentence: I'm sure she sells seashore shells. Main Clause: I'm sure. Relative Clause: she sells seashore shells (modifies the certainty expressed in the main clause). I'm → Subject + predicate (contracted form of I am). sure → Adjective (predicate adjective, describing the subject I). she sells seashore shells → Relative Clause explaining the subject's certainty. she → Subject (pronoun). sells → Predicate (simple present tense). seashore shells → Direct object (noun phrase). Complex sentence (main clause + relative clause modifying sure).

Although tongue twisters in Uzbek and English differ in terms of structure, they are characterized by similarities and connections in terms of meaning and expression.

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