

**FUNCTIONAL AND PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF PASSIVE
CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A
CORPUS-ENRICHED CONTRASTIVE STUDY**

*Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages
Faculty of English Philology and Translation Studies
Second- year Master's student in Linguistics*

Umarova Husnigul Shukurillo qizi
Husnigulumarova0812@gmail.com

Abstract: This study explores the functional and pragmatic aspects of passive constructions in English and Uzbek through a corpus-informed contrastive approach. The research examines how passive voice contributes to discourse organization, agent suppression, and stylistic variation. The findings demonstrate that English heavily relies on passive constructions in formal and academic registers, while Uzbek uses them selectively and often replaces them with alternative syntactic or lexical strategies. The study highlights the importance of pragmatic equivalence in translation and offers insights into cross-linguistic variation in information structuring.

Key words: passive constructions, voice system, agent suppression, discourse functions.

Introduction

Passive constructions are not only grammatical transformations but also discourse-driven choices shaped by communicative needs. Corpus linguistics has demonstrated that frequency, distribution, and contextual usage of passive voice vary significantly across languages and registers. English and Uzbek differ typologically, which directly influences how passive constructions function in discourse. This study integrates functional and pragmatic perspectives to provide a comparative analysis of passive voice in both languages.

Passive constructions have traditionally been defined as syntactic transformations in which the object of an active sentence becomes the subject of a passive construction, while the agent is either omitted or demoted [Quirk et al., 1985]. However, such a structural interpretation is insufficient, as passive constructions also serve important discourse functions related to information organization and communicative intent [Halliday, 1994; Yule, 2010].

Corpus-based linguistic research indicates that passive constructions are particularly frequent in formal and academic English. They are widely used in scientific discourse to emphasize processes and results rather than agents [Biber et al., 1999]. For example, expressions such as “The data were analyzed using statistical methods” or “The experiment was conducted under controlled



conditions” illustrate how passive voice contributes to impersonality and objectivity. Corpus linguistics studies further confirm that such patterns are statistically dominant in written registers compared to spoken discourse [McEnery and Hardie, 2012; Hunston, 2002].

From a discourse-analytic perspective, passive constructions also function as tools for shaping textual coherence and cohesion. They enable speakers to maintain thematic continuity by placing known information in the subject position [Halliday, 1994]. Stubbs emphasizes that corpus evidence reveals systematic patterns in how passive constructions contribute to discourse structure and meaning across texts [Stubbs, 1996].

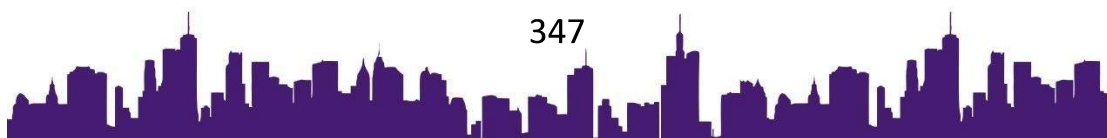
In Uzbek, passive constructions are formed morphologically באמצעות suffixes such as -il, -in, and -n, which encode passivity directly within the verb [Abdurahmonov, 1996]. For example, “Natijalar tahlil qilindi” structurally corresponds to English passive constructions. However, Uzbek linguistics research shows that passive constructions are used less frequently and are often replaced by alternative structures, including active sentences with generalized or indefinite subjects [Mahmudov, 2008].

One of the key pragmatic functions of passive constructions is agent suppression. In English, passive voice allows speakers to omit the agent when it is unknown, irrelevant, or intentionally concealed. For instance, “Mistakes were made during the investigation” demonstrates how responsibility can be obscured through passive construction [Biber et al., 1999; Yule, 2010]. Uzbek exhibits similar usage, as in “Xatolar qilindi”, although such constructions are less dominant compared to English [Mahmudov, 2008].

Another important pragmatic function is the organization of information structure. Passive constructions allow speakers to align grammatical structure with communicative priorities by foregrounding certain elements of the sentence [Halliday, 1994]. In English, this is a central mechanism for maintaining coherence in academic writing. In Uzbek, however, flexible word order often fulfills the same function, reducing the need for passive constructions [Abdurahmonov, 1996].

Passive constructions also contribute to formality and stylistic neutrality. Academic English heavily relies on passive voice to maintain an impersonal tone and to avoid explicit reference to the researcher. This is particularly evident in scientific texts, where objectivity is a key requirement [Biber et al., 1999]. In Uzbek, while passive constructions are used in formal contexts, active and impersonal structures often achieve similar stylistic effects [Mahmudov, 2008].

From a corpus linguistics perspective, frequency patterns indicate that passive constructions are significantly more common in written discourse than in spoken language [McEnery and Hardie, 2012]. Hunston notes that corpus analysis reveals not only frequency differences but also contextual patterns of



O'ZBEKISTON: ZAMONAVIY ILM-FAN VA TADQIQOT MASALALARI

usage, highlighting the importance of register in determining grammatical choices [Hunston, 2002].

The contrastive analysis also has important implications for translation studies. Translating passive constructions requires attention to functional equivalence rather than structural similarity. Baker argues that translation should preserve communicative meaning even if grammatical structures differ [(Baker, 2018)]. For example, “The results were analyzed” may be translated into Uzbek as either “Natijalar tahlil qilindi” or “Natijalarni tahlil qilishdi”, depending on context. Nida’s theory of dynamic equivalence further supports this approach, emphasizing the importance of achieving equivalent communicative effect rather than formal correspondence [Nida, 1964].

Concise Comparative Table of Passive Constructions in English and Uzbek

Dimension	English passive	Uzbek passive
Typology	Analytic language	Agglutinative language
Formation	Auxiliary “be” + past participle (e.g., is written)	Verb stem + passive suffix (-il, -in, -n) (e.g., yozildi)
Auxiliary verb	Required	Not required
Tense	Expressed via auxiliary verb forms	Expressed via verbal morphology
Agent expression	By-phrase (by the researcher)	Instrumental or often omitted
Agent omission	Very common	Common but less dominant
Word order	Supports thematic focus (theme-first)	Flexible word order reduces need for passive
Functional use	Objectivity, academic style, depersonalization	Less dominant; alternative constructions also used
Corpus frequency	High in formal/academic corpora	Moderate, less frequent than active voice
Translation tendency	Passive widely used and maintained	Often restructured (passive ↔ active)

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that passive constructions are not merely grammatical phenomena but complex functional tools shaped by discourse, pragmatics, and typological characteristics. The differences between English and Uzbek highlight the role of language structure in shaping communicative strategies.

Conclusion

The study confirms that passive constructions in English and Uzbek differ significantly in structure, frequency, and pragmatic function. English relies extensively on passive voice for discourse organization, objectivity, and stylistic neutrality, while Uzbek uses passive constructions more selectively and often employs alternative grammatical strategies. These findings

underscore the importance of functional and pragmatic analysis in understanding cross-linguistic variation and improving translation practices.

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