

A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS AND THEIR UZBEK LEXICAL EQUIVALENTS

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Abstract:

This article examines how selected English phrasal verbs correspond to Uzbek lexical and phraseological expressions. Its objective is to describe semantic correspondence, contextual variation, and structural differences between the two languages. The study uses a qualitative descriptive and contrastive approach with a reported analytical sample of 30 English multiword verbs. Contextual examples are compared in terms of meaning, grammatical structure, collocation, and functional use. Four overlapping analytical dimensions are distinguished: direct lexical correspondence, one-to-many correspondence, context-dependent correspondence, and multiword or phraseological rendering. The illustrative comparisons show that the same English form can require different Uzbek equivalents across senses. For example, take off refers to removing clothing or an aircraft leaving the ground, whereas break down expresses mechanical failure or analytical division. English particle placement also differs from the Uzbek constructions used to express comparable meanings. These observations suggest that lexical equivalence should be established at the level of a contextualized sense rather than through a single translation assigned to an entire English form. The contribution is a descriptive framework for organizing English–Uzbek correspondences; the categories are not treated as mutually exclusive frequency classes. Practical implications include teaching meanings with contextual examples and presenting grammatical behaviour alongside translation. The analysis does not establish the prevalence of individual correspondence patterns or demonstrate learning gains. Its limitations include a small qualitative sample, incomplete documentation of item selection, and the absence of independent validation of Uzbek equivalents. Future research should provide a complete item inventory and use bilingual corpus evidence and learner data to test the proposed descriptions.

Keywords: Contrastive Linguistics, English, Uzbek, Phrasal Verbs, Lexical Equivalence, Polysemy, Phraseology, Multiword Verbs, EFL

Introduction

Contrastive linguistics is concerned with the systematic comparison of two or more languages in order to identify similarities, differences, correspondences, and areas in which linguistic categories are organized differently. Within this field, lexical contrast is especially significant because languages do not necessarily divide or package experience into equivalent lexical units. The same semantic content may be expressed by a single word in one language and by a multiword expression in another.

English phrasal verbs provide a particularly productive example of this phenomenon. In its narrower grammatical sense, a phrasal verb combines a lexical verb with an adverbial particle and may have literal, extended, or idiomatic meanings. Expressions such as give up, take off, put off, look after, and carry out are frequent in contemporary English and occur in both spoken and written communication.

Their meanings cannot always be predicted from the verb alone [1].

The English–Uzbek comparison is significant because Uzbek generally does not reproduce the English verb-particle pattern through an equivalent structural category. Consequently, the meaning of an English phrasal verb can correspond to a simple Uzbek verb, a derived form, a phraseological expression, or a contextual construction. This makes phrasal verbs a valuable object for contrastive lexical and phraseological analysis.

The purpose of the present study is to classify and describe the major patterns of correspondence between selected English phrasal verbs and their Uzbek lexical equivalents. The pedagogical implications are considered only after the linguistic analysis, so that the principal focus remains on English–Uzbek contrastive linguistics.

The term phrasal verb is used here in the broader pedagogical sense of a multiword verb. Accordingly, look after is included as a prepositional verb, and put up with is discussed as a phrasal-prepositional verb. These constructions share translation problems with particle verbs, but their grammatical behaviour must be distinguished. The separability analysis below applies specifically to separable particle verbs.

The study of English phrasal verbs has developed within English grammar, lexicography, corpus linguistics, and applied linguistics. Quirk et al [2]. describe verb-particle combinations as part of the structural system of English, while Bolinger treats the phrasal verb as a significant lexical-grammatical category. More recent corpus-based work has demonstrated that a relatively small set of frequent phrasal verbs accounts for a substantial portion of their occurrence in general English. Gardner and Davies, for example, identify frequent phrasal verbs through corpus evidence and emphasize their importance for language users [3].

From a contrastive perspective, Lado established an influential foundation for comparing first-language and target-language systems. Although subsequent research has shown that structural difference alone cannot predict every learner difficulty, contrastive analysis remains valuable for describing cross-linguistic correspondences [4]. Baker further demonstrates that equivalence at word and above-word levels is context-sensitive and rarely reducible to a one-to-one relationship [5].

For English and Uzbek, the problem of equivalence becomes particularly visible in multiword lexical units. An English phrasal verb can correspond to several Uzbek verbs according to context, while the same Uzbek verb may correspond to different English expressions. Therefore, an adequate analysis must move beyond dictionary-level translation and consider semantic, syntactic, phraseological, and functional information.

The present study contributes to this area by concentrating specifically on English phrasal verbs and Uzbek lexical or phraseological renderings. Unlike a purely pedagogical study, the primary unit of analysis here is the linguistic correspondence itself.

The study addresses the following research question: How do contextual meanings and grammatical properties of selected English multiword verbs correspond to Uzbek lexical and phraseological expressions? The analysis separates observed examples from broader interpretations and considers teaching applications after the linguistic findings [6].

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative descriptive and contrastive design. The analytical sample is reported as 30 English multiword verbs associated with everyday communication, movement, change, interpersonal relations, and academic or professional activity. The purpose is to describe possible correspondence patterns rather than estimate their frequency in English or Uzbek. The selection is treated as purposive; the designation high-frequency is not used as a measured property of this sample.

The unit of comparison is a contextualized meaning of an English expression and its Uzbek rendering. A single English form can therefore appear in more than one example when its senses differ. For each comparison, the analysis considers the expressed action or state, the accompanying object or situation,

transitivity, particle or preposition behaviour, and whether the Uzbek meaning is realized through a single verb or a multiword construction. Table 1 presents ten illustrative contexts involving seven distinct English forms. Additional examples in the text address separability and semantic variation.

Four descriptive criteria organize the comparison: direct lexical correspondence within a specified sense; different Uzbek renderings across senses of the same English form; dependence on collocation or discourse context; and multiword or phraseological realization. These criteria can overlap. Combined labels identify more than one relevant dimension and are not counted as independent frequency categories.

Interpretation proceeds through comparison of the contextual meanings, description of structural differences, and discussion of lexicographic and pedagogical implications. No learner experiment, frequency calculation, or test of teaching effectiveness is undertaken. Independent ratings of translation naturalness and inter-rater agreement are not available; the Uzbek renderings are consequently treated as proposed contextual equivalents [7].

Results

Patterns of correspondence

The examples support four descriptive dimensions. Type I refers to a concise Uzbek lexical equivalent for a particular English sense. Type II describes variation across senses of the same English form. Type III identifies a rendering shaped by the accompanying object, collocation, or communicative situation. Type IV identifies a multiword Uzbek construction, including phraseological expressions where applicable. Structural difference alone does not demonstrate absence of a semantic equivalent, and not every multiword rendering is an idiom.

Table 1 illustrates how these dimensions overlap. The rows describe individual examples; their distribution does not establish the relative frequency of correspondence types in the reported sample or in either language [8].

Table 1. Contextual English–Uzbek correspondences

English phrasal verb	English context	Uzbek equivalent	Type	Contrastive observation
give up	give up smoking	chekishni tashlamoq	II	The Uzbek equivalent changes with the semantic object.
give up	give up in a competition	taslim bo‘lmoq	II	Different Uzbek lexical realization for another sense.
take off	take off a jacket	yechmoq	II	Physical meaning has a concise Uzbek verb.
take off	the plane took off	havoga ko‘tarilmoq	II	A contextual verbal construction is required.
put off	put off a meeting	kechiktirmoq	I/III	Meaning is closely tied to the event noun.
look after	look after a child	qaramoq / parvarish qilmoq	I/III/IV	A lexical verb or multiword construction expresses the contextual meaning.
carry out	carry out research	tadqiqot olib bormoq	IV	The English unit corresponds to a multiword Uzbek construction.
find out	find out the truth	haqiqatni aniqlamoq	III/IV	The Uzbek rendering depends on the object and context.

break down	the machine broke down	ishdan chiqmoq	II	The technical sense has a distinct Uzbek equivalent.
break down	break down the problem	muammoni qismlarga ajratmoq	II/IV	The transitive analytical sense requires a different construction.

One-to-many correspondence

Give up, take off, and break down illustrate different Uzbek renderings across contextual senses. Give up smoking is expressed as chekishni tashlamoq, whereas giving up in a competition can be rendered as taslim bo'lmoq. Take off a jacket corresponds to yechmoq, while the plane took off is expressed through havoga ko'tarilmoq. Mechanical breakdown corresponds to ishdan chiqmoq, whereas breaking down a problem involves qismlarga ajratmoq. These examples show why a translation selected for one sense cannot automatically represent the entire English form [9].

Structural and multiword correspondence

English separable phrasal verbs provide an additional contrast. In turn off the light and turn the light off, the particle can occur in different positions, whereas a pronoun normally occurs between the verb and particle: turn it off. Uzbek expresses the same basic meaning through a lexical verb such as o'chirmoq and does not reproduce the English particle-position pattern.

A similar contrast appears with carry out research, look after a child, and put off a meeting. In these cases, the English phrasal verb functions as part of a recurrent lexical combination, while Uzbek commonly uses a simple verb or a different multiword construction. The contrast is therefore not merely morphological; it concerns the way each language packages lexical and grammatical meaning [10].

Context and semantic interpretation

The proposed equivalent for put off a meeting is kechiktirmoq, which captures postponement through a single Uzbek verb [11]. Carry out research corresponds to tadqiqot olib bormoq, a multiword Uzbek construction. Look after a child can be expressed through qaramoq or parvarish qilmoq, with the choice depending on the intended care situation [12]. Find out the truth is rendered as haqiqatni aniqlamoq. These examples demonstrate variation in lexical realization without implying that the Uzbek expressions lack the relevant meanings [13].

The discussion of break down also distinguishes mechanical failure, emotional collapse, and analytical division. Each interpretation requires attention to context [14]. Register is relevant to the choice between expressions such as find out, discover, and ascertain, but the present qualitative comparisons do not measure their distribution across registers [15].

Discussion

Interpretation of the findings

The illustrated correspondences suggest that English and Uzbek can express comparable meanings through different lexical and grammatical resources. A concise Uzbek equivalent may be appropriate for one English sense while another sense requires a different verb or construction. Consequently, direct correspondence at the level of a contextual meaning should not be confused with stable one-to-one equivalence across all senses of an English form.

This interpretation is compatible with the context-sensitive account of equivalence discussed by Baker and with the grammatical descriptions of multiword verbs in Quirk et al. and Bolinger. Gardner and Davies provide corpus-based motivation for studying frequent English phrasal verbs; their findings do not, however, establish the frequency ranking of the particular items selected here. The contribution of this analysis lies in organizing English–Uzbek examples through explicit semantic and structural criteria.

The overlapping categories are useful for description but require refinement before quantitative use.

One-to-many correspondence concerns variation across senses, whereas multiword rendering concerns the form of a particular Uzbek equivalent. A future coding scheme should record these as separate dimensions and distinguish particle verbs from prepositional and phrasal-prepositional verbs. This would make comparisons more reproducible and prevent double counting.

Pedagogical implications

Although the principal focus of this article is contrastive linguistics, the findings have direct practical value for English teaching. First, phrasal verbs should be presented with more than one contextualized example when a unit is polysemous. Second, grammatical behaviour, especially separability and object placement, should be taught together with lexical meaning. Third, Uzbek equivalents should be used selectively to clarify semantic differences rather than as permanent one-word labels. Finally, collocations and register should be included in vocabulary activities so that learners develop knowledge of actual usage.

Contextual comparison activities can draw on the practice format exemplified by McCarthy and O'Dell and on broader vocabulary-teaching principles discussed by Thornbury. Students can compare different senses of the same English form and explain why their Uzbek renderings differ. These are teaching recommendations derived from linguistic observations; their effectiveness has not been tested in the present study.

Limitations and future research

The analysis is limited by its small purposive sample and qualitative design. A complete inventory of the 30 selected items, the exact vocabulary resources and editions, and explicit selection criteria are necessary to establish reproducibility. The ten table examples illustrate correspondence patterns but do not provide evidence for claims that any pattern is predominant or statistically rare. Naturalness and register judgements also require independent assessment by competent bilingual speakers or evidence from parallel texts.

Future research should develop an English–Uzbek database containing sense-specific examples, grammatical classifications, Uzbek renderings, and source information. Corpus analysis could then establish the occurrence of particular patterns, while a separate learner study could investigate comprehension, production, and avoidance. Such work would test the pedagogical predictions rather than treating them as demonstrated outcomes.

Conclusion

The contextual comparisons show that selected English multiword verbs can correspond to a single Uzbek verb, different Uzbek verbs across senses, or a multiword Uzbek expression. Give up, take off, and break down illustrate semantic variation, while carry out research and turn it off demonstrate differences in lexical realization and grammatical structure. The findings support sense-based comparison rather than a fixed translation assigned to every occurrence of an English form.

The proposed descriptive framework connects meaning, context, and structure in English–Uzbek lexical analysis. It offers a basis for contextual vocabulary activities, but it does not establish the frequency of correspondence types or prove teaching effectiveness. Further work should document the complete analytical inventory, validate the proposed Uzbek equivalents, and extend the comparison through corpus and learner evidence.

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