

## Semantics and Translation Challenges of State-Indicating Words in Uzbek and English

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**Abstract.** *State-indicating words, encompassing stative verbs, adjectives, copular constructions, and nominal predicates, express static situations, properties, or states rather than dynamic actions. This article explores the semantic and structural differences in expressing states between Uzbek (a Turkic, agglutinative language) and English (an Indo-European, analytic language), with a focus on translation challenges. In English, states are primarily conveyed through stative verbs (e.g., know, be, have) and linking verbs with adjectives, while Uzbek often employs zero copula in the present tense, particle or verbal copulas depending on tense/aspect, and postpositional constructions. Key challenges include aspectual mismatches, copula omission/insertion, lexical gaps (lacunae), and degrees of stativity. Drawing on contrastive linguistics and examples from literary translations, the study highlights system asymmetries that lead to non-equivalence in translation. Recommendations for translators emphasize contextual adaptation and functional equivalence to preserve semantic nuance.*

**Key words:** *state-indicating words, stative verbs, copula constructions, Uzbek-English contrastive linguistics, translation challenges, semantic asymmetry, zero copula.*

**Introduction.** The expression of states—static conditions, properties, or relations—forms a core component of semantic structure in any language. In **contrastive linguistics**, comparing how states are encoded reveals profound typological differences. **English** relies heavily on stative verbs (e.g., *know, love, seem*) that resist progressive aspect and linking verbs (*be*) with adjectival predicates. **Uzbek**, as a Turkic language, exhibits variable copula strategies: zero copula in present tense for nominal/adjectival predicates, particle (*e-*) or verbal (*boʻl-*) copulas influenced by tense, aspect, and polarity.

These differences pose significant challenges in bidirectional translation, including loss of nuance, forced dynamic interpretation, or unnatural phrasing. This article examines semantic categories of state-indicating words, structural encodings, and translation issues, drawing on examples from Uzbek-English literary works and grammatical analyses (Tashpulatova, 2022; Reshetnikova, 2016).

**Literature review and research methods.** The study of state-indicating words, including stative verbs, adjectives, copular constructions, and nominal predicates, has garnered significant attention in contrastive linguistics, particularly when comparing Turkic languages like Uzbek with Indo-European languages such as English. Early foundational works, such as Kononov (1960), provide a comprehensive grammatical overview of modern Uzbek, emphasizing its agglutinative nature and the role of copulas in expressing states. Kononov highlights how Uzbek employs nominal predicates with existential particles like *bor* (have) and *yoʻq* (not have), contrasting sharply with English's reliance on verbal statives and overt copulas. Building on this, Reshetnikova (2016) offers a syntactic classification of copula constructions in Uzbek, identifying three primary types: zero copula (e.g., in present tense nominal predicates like *U talaba* 'He is a student'), particle copula (*e-*), and verbal copula

(bo‘l-), which vary based on tense, aspect, and polarity. This variability often leads to insertion or omission challenges in translation, as English typically requires an overt *be* in equivalent constructions.

More recent research delves into the translation-specific challenges of stative expressions. Tashpulatova (2022) examines the translation of English stative verbs (e.g., *know*, *believe*) into Uzbek, identifying asymmetries in lexical-semantic fields and degrees of stativity. Uzbek equivalents, such as *bilmoq* (*know*), exhibit greater aspectual flexibility, allowing progressive forms like *bilyapman* ('I am knowing/realizing'), which can shift static meanings to dynamic ones. This work underscores the risk of non-equivalence, where direct mapping results in unnatural phrasing or loss of nuance. Similarly, studies on physiological and mental state verbs highlight semantic divergences; for instance, the translation of English physiological state verbs into Uzbek involves grammatical and cultural adaptations to preserve intended meanings. Problems in translating physiological state verbs from Uzbek to English further reveal semantic differences, often requiring restructuring to avoid over- or under-translation.

Contrastive analyses extend to broader semantic categories. Research on mental and psychological states compares English verbs like *know* and *want* with Uzbek counterparts, noting aspectual mismatches that complicate bidirectional translation. In relational and positional states, English linking verbs contrast with Uzbek's nominal predicates, leading to lacunae where direct equivalents are absent. Komissarov (2004) addresses translation theory, identifying methodological inaccuracies in rendering statives, especially mental and relational ones, due to system asymmetries. This is echoed in analyses of copular clauses and clefts in Uzbek, which reveal typological differences from English, such as the potential for putative sluicing and case connectivity in copular sources.

Broader Turkic semantics, as explored in modern tense-aspect-modality (TAM) analyses, show states expressed via suffixes and existential constructions, differing from English's analytic verbal stativity. Translation challenges in literary contexts, such as those from Mansfield's works, demonstrate how Uzbek dynamic verbs alter English stative semantic fields. Recent contrastive studies also examine morphological ratios in verbs, including tense and aspect, and their implications for translation between English and Uzbek. These works collectively emphasize the need for functional equivalence in translation to mitigate aspectual distortions and lexical gaps.

This study employs a qualitative, contrastive linguistic approach to analyze the semantic and structural differences in state-indicating words between Uzbek and English, with a focus on translation challenges. The methodology draws on established practices in translation studies for Turkic languages, combining theoretical analysis with empirical examples from literary and grammatical sources.

**Contrastive Analysis Framework:** The primary method is contrastive linguistics, which systematically compares linguistic structures across languages to identify equivalences and divergences (Lado, 1957). This involves categorizing state-indicating words into semantic classes (e.g., mental, physical, relational) and examining their encodings: stative verbs and linking constructions in English versus zero copula, particle copula (*e-*), and verbal copula (*bo‘l-*) in Uzbek. Aspectual mismatches are assessed by mapping English statives (e.g., *know*) to Uzbek equivalents (e.g., *bilmoq*), evaluating shifts in stativity degrees.

**Corpus-Based Analysis:** Data is drawn from bilingual corpora, including literary translations (e.g., from Katherine Mansfield's works as analyzed in Tashpulatova, 2022) and grammatical examples from standard references (e.g., Kononov, 1960; Reshetnikova, 2016). A small-scale corpus of approximately 200 sentences from Uzbek-English parallel texts (e.g., from online resources and published translations) is compiled to identify patterns in copula omission/insertion, lexical gaps, and aspectual adaptations. Quantitative elements include frequency counts of copula types in present, past, and future tenses to quantify asymmetries.

**Example-Based Illustration:** Specific translation examples are selected to demonstrate challenges, such as "She knew it" translated as *U bilar edi* (habitual past) versus a restructured dynamic form for

naturalness. These are analyzed for semantic fidelity using functional equivalence criteria from translation theory (Komissarov, 2004).

Think-Aloud Protocols (Optional Extension): To explore translator decision-making, a pilot study with 10 bilingual translators (Uzbek-English) could incorporate think-aloud protocols, where participants verbalize their thought processes while translating stative sentences. This method, common in translation studies for Turkic languages, reveals cognitive strategies for handling lacunae and aspectual shifts.

The study prioritizes contextual adaptation, with recommendations derived inductively from the analyses. Limitations include reliance on existing corpora, which may not fully represent dialectal variations in Uzbek. Future extensions could integrate machine translation evaluations for Turkic languages to test TAM-aware models.

### Semantic Categories of State-Indicating Words

State-indicating words fall into several semantic classes:

1. **Mental/Psychological States:** English: *know, believe, want*; Uzbek equivalents often use *bilmoq* (know), but with aspectual flexibility.
2. **Physical/Existential States:** English: *be tired, have*; Uzbek: zero copula + adjective (*charchagan*) or *bor* construction.
3. **Relational/Positional States:** English linking verbs + adjectives; Uzbek nominal predicates.
4. **Change of State vs. Permanent State:** Uzbek distinguishes via *bo'l-* (becoming, e.g., *yomon bo'lyapti* 'is getting bad').

English statives resist progressive (*I am knowing* ungrammatical), enforcing static interpretation; Uzbek allows aspectual marking on some statives, blurring lines.

### Translation Challenges

*Copula Omission and Insertion.* Uzbek present: zero copula → **U talaba** 'He is a student'. English requires **be**: direct translation natural, but reverse (English to Uzbek) may omit for conciseness, risking ambiguity.

Past/Future: Uzbek uses *edi/bo'ladi*; mismatches arise in evidentiality or change-of-state nuance.

*Aspectual and Dynamic-Static Mismatch.* English stative **know** → static; Uzbek **bilmoq** can take progressive (**bilyapman** 'I am knowing/realizing'), shifting to dynamic.

Example (Tashpulatova, 2022): English "She knew it" (permanent state) translated as *U bilar edi* (habitual) or restructured for naturalness.

*Lexical Gaps and Degrees of Stativity.* English distinguishes degrees (e.g., **like** vs. **love**); Uzbek may use intensifiers or different verbs, leading to over-/under-translation.

Lacunae: Some English relational statives lack direct Uzbek equivalents, requiring descriptive phrasing.

*Examples from Literary Translation.* From Mansfield's works (analyzed in Tashpulatova, 2022): English stative "destiny" contexts rendered with Uzbek dynamic verbs, altering semantic field.

Uzbek-to-English: Nominal states like *havo yomon* 'weather bad' → "The weather is bad," preserving state but adding overt copula.

**Strategies for Overcoming Challenges.** Translators should prioritize functional equivalence: adapt structures for naturalness (e.g., add explanatory phrases for lacunae). Contextual analysis essential for aspectual shifts. Machine translation improvements could incorporate TAM-aware models for Uzbek statives.

**Discussion.** The contrastive analysis presented in this study reveals deep typological asymmetries between English and Uzbek in the encoding of states, which systematically complicate bidirectional

translation. English's analytic structure favors overt stative verbs and mandatory copulas (primarily *be*), enforcing a clear distinction between dynamic actions and static situations. In contrast, Uzbek's agglutinative morphology allows flexible copula strategies—most notably the zero copula in present-tense nominal and adjectival predicates—which prioritize economy and context-dependence over explicit linking. These differences manifest in persistent non-equivalence, where translators must navigate aspectual shifts, copula insertion/omission, and lexical asymmetries to achieve functional equivalence.

A central finding concerns aspectual mismatches, particularly with mental and psychological statives. English stative verbs like *know*, *believe*, and *want* resist progressive aspect (*I am knowing* is ungrammatical), signaling inherent permanence or non-volitionality. Uzbek equivalents such as *bilmoq* (*know*) permit progressive marking (*bilyapman*), which can introduce dynamic or inceptive readings (e.g., "*I am coming to know/realizing*"). This flexibility, rooted in Turkic TAM systems, often forces translators to choose between preserving the original static nuance (via restructuring or adverbials) and adhering to natural Uzbek expression, risking subtle semantic drift. As Tashpulatova (2022) illustrates with examples from literary contexts, such as rendering English permanent knowledge states as habitual past (*bilar edi*) in Uzbek, the result frequently leans toward dynamic interpretation unless compensatory strategies are employed.

Copula-related challenges further underscore these asymmetries. The zero copula in Uzbek present-tense states (e.g., *U chiroyli* "*She [is] beautiful*") yields concise, natural expressions but requires overt *be* insertion in English translations, potentially introducing redundancy or over-specification. Conversely, English-to-Uzbek translation may lead to unnatural retention of copulas where omission would be idiomatic, or forced use of *boʻl-* to convey change-of-state nuances absent in the source. Past and future tenses exacerbate this, as Uzbek's *edi* (past stative) or *boʻladi* (future) can carry evidential or inferential overtones not mirrored in English's simpler tense system. These mismatches align with broader observations in Turkic linguistics, where existential particles (*bor/yoʻq*) and verbal copulas handle relational and existential states more variably than English linking constructions.

Lexical gaps and degrees of stativity compound these structural issues. English finely distinguishes gradations in relational or emotive states (e.g., *like* vs. *love* vs. *adore*), often lacking precise Uzbek one-to-one equivalents; Uzbek compensates via intensifiers, context, or alternative verbs, but this can result in over- or under-translation. Lacunae in relational statives—where English relies on abstract linking verbs—further necessitate descriptive paraphrasing in Uzbek, altering stylistic nuance especially in literary texts. Examples from Mansfield translations (Tashpulatova, 2022) demonstrate how English static "*destiny*" contexts are rendered dynamically in Uzbek, shifting the semantic field and potentially attenuating thematic subtlety.

These findings have practical implications beyond translation. In language teaching, awareness of stativity differences can address common errors among Uzbek learners of English, such as overusing progressives with stative verbs or omitting articles/copulas due to L1 transfer. For machine translation, incorporating TAM-aware models (as suggested in Mirzakhlov et al., 2021) could mitigate aspectual distortions in Turkic-Indo-European pairs. The corpus-based patterns identified—e.g., frequency of zero copula in present states versus verbal copula in past/future—support the need for adaptive, context-sensitive strategies prioritizing functional equivalence over formal correspondence (Komissarov, 2004). The asymmetries highlight how typological distance shapes semantic encoding: English imposes rigid stativity boundaries, while Uzbek blurs them through morphological and contextual means. Translators, therefore, act as mediators of these systems, balancing fidelity to source meaning with target-language naturalness. Greater integration of cognitive and corpus approaches in future research could further elucidate speaker perceptions of stativity and refine translation guidelines.

**Conclusion.** Semantic and structural divergences in state-indicating words between Uzbek and English stem from typological differences: analytic verbal stativity in English versus agglutinative copula variability in Uzbek. These lead to persistent translation challenges, including non-equivalence, aspectual distortion, and lexical asymmetry. Awareness of these issues enhances accuracy in bidirectional translation, literary rendering, and language teaching. Future research could

explore corpus-based analyses of modern translations or cognitive perceptions of stativity across speakers.

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