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Attributes as Secondary Sentence Elements: Types and Learning Difficulties Encountered by Uzbek-Speaking Students

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Abstract: *This article examines the grammatical and syntactic characteristics of attributes as secondary sentence elements in Russian, focusing on their classification and the difficulties encountered by Uzbek-speaking students. Particular attention is paid to agreed attributes, non-agreed attributes, and appositions, as well as the linguistic factors contributing to errors in their formation and usage. The study adopts a descriptive and contrastive linguistic approach to identify structural differences between Russian and Uzbek grammatical systems. The analysis demonstrates that the principal difficulty arises from differences in grammatical agreement. Russian is characterized by an inflectional grammatical system in which adjectives, participles, adjectival pronouns, and ordinal numerals agree with the nouns they modify in gender, number, and case. In contrast, Uzbek is an agglutinative language in which attributive modifiers generally remain unchanged regardless of the grammatical form of the modified noun. These differences may lead to negative language transfer, particularly in the selection of adjective endings, grammatical gender, and case forms. The article systematizes the major types of attributes, examines representative learner errors, and proposes instructional strategies based on contrastive analysis, contextualized grammar exercises, and systematic practice. The findings emphasize the importance of integrating grammatical explanations with communicative activities to improve learners' syntactic accuracy and language competence.*

Key words: *Attribute, Agreed Attribute, Non-Agreed Attribute, Apposition, Grammatical Agreement, Russian as a Foreign Language, Uzbek-Speaking Students, Contrastive Linguistics, Language Interference*

Introduction

Grammar plays a fundamental role in the development of linguistic competence because it provides the structural foundation for constructing meaningful and grammatically accurate sentences. Among the major grammatical categories of Russian syntax, secondary sentence elements are particularly important for expressing additional information, specifying relationships, and expanding sentence structures. One of these elements is the attribute, which identifies or characterizes a person, object, phenomenon, or concept by indicating its qualities, properties, possession, or other distinguishing features.

In traditional Russian grammar, an attribute is defined as a secondary sentence element that modifies a nominal component and answers questions corresponding to what kind?, whose?, and which? [1]. Attributes contribute to the semantic precision and descriptive richness of sentences. Their correct use is essential for both spoken and written communication, particularly in academic, professional, and everyday contexts. However, the acquisition of Russian attributes presents considerable difficulties for students whose native language is Uzbek. These difficulties are primarily associated with significant typological differences between the grammatical systems of Russian and Uzbek. Russian is an inflectional language in which grammatical relationships are frequently expressed

through changes in word endings. Adjectives, participles, adjectival pronouns, and ordinal numerals generally agree with the nouns they modify in gender, number, and case. For instance, the adjective новый (new) changes its form depending on the grammatical characteristics of the noun:
новый дом — a new house;
новая книга — a new book;
новое окно — a new window;
новые дома — new houses.
In contrast, Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family and is predominantly agglutinative. Grammatical meanings are commonly expressed by adding suffixes to lexical stems, while attributive modifiers normally remain unchanged regardless of the grammatical characteristics of the modified noun [2], [3].
For example:
chiroyli kitob — a beautiful book;
chiroyli kitoblar — beautiful books;
chiroyli kitobda — in a beautiful book.
In all three examples, the Uzbek adjective chiroyli retains its original form. This structural feature differs fundamentally from the Russian system of grammatical agreement.
As a consequence, Uzbek-speaking learners may transfer grammatical patterns from their native language into Russian, resulting in errors such as красивый книга instead of красивая книга (a beautiful book).
The relevance of this research lies in the need to develop effective methodological approaches for teaching Russian syntax to Uzbek-speaking students. Understanding the linguistic causes of grammatical errors makes it possible to design more targeted instructional strategies and improve the effectiveness of Russian language teaching.
The aim of this study is to examine the main types of attributes in Russian and identify the grammatical difficulties associated with their acquisition by Uzbek-speaking students.
The study addresses three research objectives: to systematize the classification of attributes in Russian syntax; to compare Russian attributive constructions with their Uzbek equivalents; and to identify typical grammatical errors and propose practical strategies for preventing them.
The grammatical nature of attributes has been examined extensively in Russian linguistic research. Traditional grammatical theories classify attributes according to their syntactic relationships with the modified noun and the morphological characteristics of their expression.
The academic reference work Russian Grammar, edited by N. Yu. Shvedova [4], provides a comprehensive description of Russian syntactic structures, including agreement, government, and adjacency as major types of syntactic relationships. Within this framework, attributes are analyzed according to their formal characteristics and their semantic relationships with nominal elements.
N. S. Valgina [5] further develops the syntactic classification of secondary sentence elements and discusses the grammatical distinctions between agreed and non-agreed attributes. Her approach emphasizes the importance of identifying syntactic relationships rather than relying exclusively on the lexical category of the dependent element.
From a comparative linguistic perspective, the structural characteristics of Turkic languages provide an important theoretical basis for explaining grammatical interference among Uzbek-speaking learners.
Johanson and Csató [6] describe major typological characteristics of Turkic languages, including agglutinative morphology, grammatical suffixation, and the absence of grammatical gender as a nominal agreement category. These characteristics help explain why Uzbek-speaking students may

experience difficulties when learning Russian adjective agreement and grammatical gender distinctions.

In the field of language teaching methodology, Azimov and Shchukin discuss linguistic and pedagogical concepts relevant to foreign language instruction. Their methodological framework supports the use of systematic grammatical explanations, learner-oriented exercises, and attention to language interference.

The reviewed literature establishes a theoretical foundation for understanding the grammatical characteristics of attributes. However, a comparative explanation is also necessary to connect these linguistic descriptions with the specific learning difficulties experienced by Uzbek-speaking students [7].

The present study therefore combines Russian syntactic theory with a contrastive analysis of Russian and Uzbek grammatical structures.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive and contrastive linguistic methodology to investigate the grammatical characteristics of attributes in Russian and the difficulties potentially encountered by Uzbek-speaking learners.

The research is based on theoretical grammatical sources, comparative linguistic descriptions, and illustrative sentence constructions.

The primary methodological approaches include descriptive analysis, contrastive analysis, grammatical classification, and error analysis.

Descriptive analysis is used to examine the grammatical forms and syntactic functions of attributes in Russian. Particular attention is given to agreement, government, adjacency, and apposition.

Contrastive analysis is applied to compare attributive constructions in Russian and Uzbek, identifying structural similarities and differences that may influence language acquisition.

Grammatical classification is employed to organize attributes according to the morphological means of their expression and their syntactic relationships with modified nouns.

Error analysis is used to examine representative incorrect constructions that illustrate possible difficulties arising from cross-linguistic interference. These examples are constructed for analytical and instructional purposes rather than extracted from an empirical learner corpus.

The study does not involve a questionnaire, classroom experiment, or statistical assessment of student performance. Consequently, its findings should be understood as a theoretically grounded qualitative interpretation rather than quantitative evidence of error frequency.

Results and Discussion

Classification of Attributes in Russian

The analysis identifies two principal categories of attributes in Russian syntax: agreed attributes and non-agreed attributes. Apposition constitutes a special type of attributive relationship, usually expressed by a noun.

The classification reflects differences in grammatical agreement, morphological expression, and syntactic dependency.

Table 1. Types of Attributes in Russian and Learning Difficulties for Uzbek-Speaking Students

Type of attribute	Grammatical expression	Russian examples	Typical difficulties
Agreed attribute	Adjective, participle, adjectival pronoun, ordinal numeral	новая книга; читающий студент; наш дом; второй этаж	Incorrect agreement in gender, number, or case: красивый книга

Non-agreed attribute (government)	Noun in an oblique case, sometimes with a preposition	дом отца; платье из шёлка	Incorrect selection of the dependent noun's case: дом отец
Non-agreed attribute (adjacency)	Infinitive, adverb, indeclinable word, comparative form	желание учиться; яйцо всмятку; кофе покрепче	Incorrect construction or attempted inflection of an indeclinable element
Non-agreed possessive attribute	Indeclinable possessive pronouns его, её, их	её книга; их дом	Confusion between его/её/их and reflexive possessive свой
Apposition	Noun providing an alternative designation	писатель-земляк; город Ташкент; в городе Самарканде	Incorrect case forms and inconsistent hyphenation

Source: Compiled by the author based on Russian Grammar [1] and Valgina [2]. The examples are illustrative.

Agreed Attributes

Agreed attributes constitute one of the most common forms of attributive modification in Russian. Their defining characteristic is grammatical agreement with the modified noun in gender, number, and case, where the relevant distinctions are morphologically expressed.

Consider the following examples:

новый дом — нового дома — о новом доме

(a new house — of a new house — about a new house)

новая книга — новой книги — о новой книге

(a new book — of a new book — about a new book)

These examples demonstrate that the adjective changes its grammatical form according to the characteristics of the noun.

For Uzbek-speaking students, this system represents a significant learning challenge because Uzbek attributive adjectives normally do not undergo corresponding morphological changes.

For example:

Yangi uy — yangi uyning — yangi uy haqida.

Although the Uzbek noun changes its grammatical form or combines with a postposition, the adjective yangi remains unchanged.

This difference may lead learners to produce grammatically incorrect Russian expressions such as новый книга instead of новая книга.

4.3. Non-Agreed Attributes

Non-agreed attributes differ from agreed attributes because they do not reproduce the grammatical gender, number, and case forms of the modified noun.

Instead, they are connected to the main word through government or adjacency.

Examples include:

дом отца — father's house;

платье из шёлка — a silk dress;

желание учиться — the desire to study;

яйцо всмятку — a soft-boiled egg.

In constructions involving government, the dependent noun appears in a particular grammatical case determined by the construction.

For example, дом отца requires the genitive form отца.

An incorrect expression such as дом отец may emerge when the learner fails to apply the required case ending [8].

In constructions involving adjacency, the dependent element may be an infinitive, adverb, or another form that does not agree morphologically with the noun.

These constructions require learners to recognize the semantic and syntactic relationship between the components rather than attempting to apply adjective agreement rules universally.

Apposition

Apposition represents a special attributive construction in which a noun provides an additional name, identification, or characterization of another noun.

Examples include:

писатель-земляк — a writer who is a fellow countryman;

город Ташкент — the city of Tashkent;

в городе Самарканде — in the city of Samarkand.

In many Russian constructions, geographical names functioning as appositions agree with a generic geographical noun in case.

For example:

город Самарканд — в городе Самарканде.

However, the declension of geographical appositions is not universal and depends on the type of name and established grammatical conventions.

Uzbek-speaking students may experience difficulties because equivalent Uzbek constructions follow a different morphological pattern.

For instance, the Uzbek expression Samarqand shahrida does not require an independent Russian-style case agreement between two nouns [9], [10].

Therefore, instruction should emphasize the grammatical structure of appositions and provide contextualized examples.

Comparison of Russian and Uzbek Attributive Constructions

The contrastive analysis reveals several important differences between the two languages.

Table 2. Comparative Characteristics of Attributes in Russian and Uzbek

Grammatical feature	Russian	Uzbek
Grammatical gender	Masculine, feminine, and neuter	No grammatical gender category
Adjective agreement	Agreement in gender, number, and case	Attributive adjectives generally remain unchanged
Plural constructions	Adjective and noun may both display plural marking	Plural marking generally appears on the noun
Case relationships	Noun and agreeing adjective may both change form	Case suffixes are typically attached to the noun
Attributive word order	Usually before the noun, with variation	Usually before the noun
Possessive constructions	Possessive pronouns and genitive constructions	Genitive and possessive suffix constructions

Source: Author's comparative analysis based on [1]–[3].

The findings indicate that the greatest structural contrast concerns grammatical agreement.

Russian requires learners to coordinate the grammatical properties of modifying words and modified nouns, whereas Uzbek typically expresses nominal grammatical categories without corresponding inflection of attributive adjectives.
This structural difference provides a plausible explanation for the difficulties associated with Russian adjective endings and noun gender identification.

Discussion

The results of the contrastive analysis suggest that difficulties in acquiring Russian attributes are closely related to the interaction between the grammatical systems of Russian and Uzbek.
Three principal categories of potential errors can be identified.
Errors in Grammatical Agreement
The first category concerns the absence of grammatical agreement between adjectives and nouns [11].
For example:
Incorrect: красивый девушка
Correct: красивая девушка
English translation: a beautiful girl.
The incorrect construction demonstrates the use of a masculine adjective with a feminine noun.
Such errors may arise because Uzbek adjectives do not change according to the gender of the modified noun.
A useful instructional strategy is to introduce adjectives together with nouns representing different grammatical genders:
новый дом — новая книга — новое окно.
Repeated practice with these constructions helps learners associate adjective endings with noun gender.
Difficulties in Identifying Grammatical Gender
The second category concerns incorrect identification of noun gender.
Unlike Russian, Uzbek does not have a grammatical gender category.
Consequently, Uzbek-speaking learners must acquire grammatical gender as an additional lexical and morphological feature of Russian nouns.
For example:
интересный фильм — an interesting film;
интересная книга — an interesting book;
интересное задание — an interesting assignment.
The analysis suggests that noun gender should be taught together with adjective agreement rather than as an isolated grammatical topic [12].
Visual classification exercises, noun-adjective matching tasks, and contextual sentence construction may support the acquisition of these patterns.
Difficulties in Selecting Attributive Constructions
The third category involves distinguishing agreed from non-agreed attributes and using possessive constructions correctly.
For example:
дом отца — father's house;
отцовский дом — father's house.
Although the two constructions are semantically related, they differ in their grammatical organization and may carry contextual differences in meaning.
Another difficulty concerns the distinction between ordinary possessive pronouns and the reflexive possessive pronoun свой [13].

For example:
Он взял свою книгу. — He took his own book.
Он взял его книгу. — He took his book (typically referring to another male person).
These distinctions are important because the incorrect choice of a possessive form may alter the intended meaning of the sentence.
Pedagogical Strategies for Overcoming Learning Difficulties
The findings support the use of an integrated instructional approach combining explicit grammatical instruction, contrastive analysis, and communicative practice.
First, teachers should introduce adjectives together with nouns and their grammatical genders.
Second, students should practice case transformations using connected noun-adjective expressions rather than memorizing adjective endings separately.
Third, Russian attributive constructions should be compared directly with their Uzbek equivalents.
For example:
Russian: красивая книга
Uzbek: chiroyli kitob
Russian: о красивой книге
Uzbek: chiroyli kitob haqida
This comparison illustrates that the Russian adjective changes its grammatical form, whereas the Uzbek adjective remains unchanged.
Fourth, transformation exercises should be used to develop an understanding of alternative attributive constructions [14], [15].
Examples include:
книга отца → отцовская книга
дом из кирпича → кирпичный дом
Finally, grammatical knowledge should be reinforced through short connected texts, dialogues, and writing activities.
Contextualized grammar practice can help students move beyond the mechanical application of rules and develop greater accuracy in actual communication.
These recommendations are consistent with general principles of foreign language teaching that emphasize systematic instruction and meaningful language practice.

Conclusion

The present study examined attributes as secondary sentence elements in Russian and analyzed the grammatical difficulties that may arise among Uzbek-speaking students.
The findings demonstrate that Russian attributes can be classified into agreed attributes, non-agreed attributes, and appositions, each characterized by specific morphological and syntactic features.
The principal difficulty is associated with grammatical agreement because Russian requires changes in adjective and related modifier forms according to gender, number, and case, whereas Uzbek attributive adjectives generally remain unchanged.
Additional difficulties include identifying grammatical gender, selecting appropriate case forms, distinguishing between agreed and non-agreed constructions, and correctly using possessive pronouns and geographical appositions.
The contrastive analysis suggests that effective instruction should combine explicit grammatical explanations with systematic comparisons between Russian and Uzbek.
Particular emphasis should be placed on noun gender recognition, adjective agreement, case transformation, error correction, and contextualized communicative practice.

From a pedagogical perspective, teaching attributes as meaningful components of sentence structure rather than isolated grammatical forms may contribute to more accurate language production.

The study is limited by its theoretical and qualitative character. The illustrative errors presented in the analysis were not collected from an empirical sample of students.

Future research should therefore investigate authentic written and spoken learner data to determine the frequency and distribution of attributive errors among Uzbek-speaking students.

Further classroom-based studies could also evaluate the effectiveness of contrastive teaching strategies in improving grammatical accuracy and communicative competence in Russian as a foreign language.

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