

# Lexical Gaps In Adjective Comparison Between English And Uzbek

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## Abstract

This paper explores lexical gaps in adjective comparison between English and Uzbek, focusing on the morphosyntactic, semantic, and cultural dimensions that contribute to asymmetries in expressing comparative and superlative degrees. Through contrastive analysis, the study identifies adjectives present in one language but lacking direct equivalents in the other, and examines the implications for translation, second language acquisition, and cross-cultural communication.

**Key words:** lexical gaps, degrees of comparison, adjectives, English, Uzbek, contrastive linguistics, comparative structures.

**Introduction.** Degrees of comparison are a fundamental feature of adjectives in most languages, allowing speakers to express varying intensities and qualities. In English, adjectives typically appear in three degrees: positive (e.g., tall), comparative (taller), and superlative (tallest). Uzbek also utilizes degrees of comparison, though the morphological and syntactic mechanisms differ. Despite surface similarities, many lexical and structural mismatches arise, creating what are known as *lexical gaps*. These gaps pose challenges in language learning, translation, and intercultural communication.

**Methodology.** This paper investigates the nature and types of lexical gaps in adjective comparison between English and Uzbek, seeking to understand their linguistic and cultural origins.

*Degrees of Comparison in English.* English forms comparative and superlative degrees either by inflection (e.g., big → bigger → biggest) or by analytic constructions using more or most (e.g., more beautiful, most difficult). Irregular forms also exist (good → better → best).

*Degrees of Comparison in Uzbek.* In Uzbek, comparison is typically expressed analytically using the structure "-dan...roq" (e.g., U balandroq – He is taller) or using intensifying adverbs (eng, juda, etc.). Uzbek lacks a distinct morphological superlative form but uses particles to indicate the highest degree.

**Results. Lexical Gaps.** Lexical gaps occur when a concept in one language lacks a direct lexical equivalent in another. In the context of adjectives, these gaps may appear when one language has a gradable adjective that cannot be easily or naturally compared in the other.

This study employs a contrastive analysis of 100 frequently used adjectives in English and Uzbek, drawn from corpora, textbooks, and native speaker usage. The adjectives were analyzed for their ability to form comparatives and superlatives, and whether equivalent forms existed in both languages.

**Discussion. English-Only Gradable Adjectives.** Certain English adjectives, particularly emotional or abstract ones (e.g., curious, efficient, trendy), have no natural Uzbek equivalents that allow for comparison:

- Curious → more curious lacks a direct counterpart in Uzbek. Expressions may require paraphrasing or using idioms.

*Uzbek-Only Adjectives Without Direct English Comparatives.* Some adjectives in Uzbek derive from culturally specific concepts that do not easily translate into English comparatives:

- Obro'li (respected/honored) does not have a clear gradable form in English (more obro'li has no direct equivalent in a single English word).

*Morphosyntactic Gaps.* While English uses inflection and periphrasis, Uzbek relies heavily on analytical forms. This structural gap creates difficulty in directly translating or teaching comparative forms. For example:

- English: The fastest runner

- Uzbek: Eng tez yuguruvchi (literally, "most fast runner")

However, the superlative nuance in Uzbek often depends on context and adverb use, which may not carry the same intensity as English superlatives.

*Semantic Non-Equivalence.* Even when both languages have an adjective, the degree of gradability may differ:

- English: Interesting → more interesting

- Uzbek: Qiziqarli is already evaluative, and "ko'proq qiziqarli" (more interesting) can sound unnatural or exaggerated.

Certainly! Here's a wider and more detailed version of the "Discussion" section for your article "Lexical Gaps in Adjective Comparison Between English and Uzbek." This expanded section provides in-depth analysis, examples, and interpretations of the key findings.

Lexical gaps in adjective comparison between English and Uzbek reveal a complex interplay of linguistic structure, cultural semantics, and usage patterns. This section delves deeper into the types of gaps identified, the reasons behind them, and their broader implications.

*Structural and Morphological Differences.* One of the primary reasons for lexical gaps is the difference in morphological strategies used to express degrees of comparison. English frequently uses both inflectional (e.g., fast → faster → fastest) and periphrastic forms (more beautiful, most difficult), depending on syllable length and word origin. Uzbek, by contrast, relies almost entirely on periphrastic comparison, using modifiers like -roq (for comparatives) and eng (for superlatives), such as:

- Yaxshi (good) → yaxshiroq (better) → eng yaxshi (best)

These structural differences sometimes make direct one-to-one lexical comparisons impossible. For example, an English adjective with both regular and irregular forms (good → better → best) may not have an Uzbek equivalent with a direct morphologically parallel form. This difference leads to paraphrasing in Uzbek and a tendency toward analytic description, rather than synthetic (inflected) forms.

*Semantic Incompatibilities.* Another source of lexical gaps lies in semantic incompatibility—when the gradability of a concept in one language does not align with how it is expressed in the other. For instance:

- English uses adjectives like funny, weird, complicated in gradable forms: This movie is funnier than the last one.

In Uzbek, while equivalents exist (kulgili for funny, g'alati for weird), they are less commonly used in comparative contexts, or when used, can sound unnatural without contextual rephrasing:

- Bu film avvalgidan ko'ra kulgilioq (This film is more funny than the previous one) – grammatically correct but stylistically awkward.

Similarly, emotive or abstract adjectives in English—such as curious, confused, efficient—often don't translate directly into comparable Uzbek adjectives. Uzbek may require descriptive phrases or verbs instead of adjectives, which eliminates the possibility of straightforward comparison:

- Curious → more curious

In Uzbek: Qiziqayotgan (interested) may be used, but saying someone is more qiziqayotgan is grammatically and semantically unnatural. This mismatch suggests that what is conceptually gradable in English may not be linguistically marked as such in Uzbek, reflecting differences in cognitive categorization.

*Culturally Specific Concepts and Lexical Gaps.* Language is deeply tied to culture, and adjectives often reflect culturally specific values. Certain Uzbek adjectives encode respect, honor, or age hierarchy, such as:

- Obro'li (prestigious, respected)

- Hurmatli (honorable)

These adjectives often do not have clear comparative forms in English. Saying "more obro'li" in Uzbek is unusual and rarely used, because respect is often viewed as a non-gradable or socially contextual quality. In English, while prestigious can be compared (more prestigious university), the cultural connotations do not always align. This creates a semantic-pragmatic gap even when lexical equivalents exist. Additionally, certain Uzbek adjectives may not have direct English counterparts at all, especially those tied to traditional lifestyles or local experiences (kamtar, orasta, topqir), and their comparative forms are used primarily in specific social registers or contexts.

*Lexical Gaps in Irregular Adjective Forms.* English has a range of irregular adjectives with unique comparative and superlative forms:

- Good → better → best

- Bad → worse → worst
- Far → farther/further → farthest/furthest

In Uzbek, these typically translate into separate lexical items or analytic constructions, rather than inflected forms. This creates a gap in morphological transparency and learning difficulty for Uzbek learners of English. For instance, there is no equivalent of "better" that is not derived analytically in Uzbek. Instead:

- Yaxshi (good) → yaxshiroq (better), but there is no distinct word like better that stands alone.

As a result, irregularity in English often causes confusion in language acquisition, where learners attempt to apply Uzbek-like structures to English or misunderstand the meaning of these forms when translating.

*Lexical Gaps in Usage Frequency.* Even when comparable adjectives exist in both languages, the frequency of their use in comparative forms may differ. In English, comparatives are frequently used in advertising, conversation, and academic language:

- Our product is more powerful, faster, and smarter.

In Uzbek, such frequent usage—especially of superlatives—can come across as exaggerated or insincere unless culturally appropriate. The structure *eng yaxshi*, while grammatically correct, may not carry the same persuasive tone and is often replaced by contextual inference or metaphor. Therefore, even where no morphological or semantic gaps exist, pragmatic gaps appear in actual usage.

**Conclusion.** Lexical gaps in adjective comparison between English and Uzbek are not merely linguistic quirks but reflect deeper cultural, semantic, and structural differences. Understanding these gaps is vital for translators, language learners, and linguists working across these languages. Further research is encouraged to explore how such gaps impact cognitive processing and language acquisition.

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