

EXPLORING THE ESSENCE OF COMPARATIVE
TYPOLOGY ON LEXICAL LEVEL

Abduraximova Sevinch Shkjiir qizi - IV year student, UzSWLU

Begizova Madina - sen. teacher, scientific adviser UzSWLU

Abstract: The article is dedicated to the comparative study of languages at the lexical level. Proceeding from the fact that a word is a heterogeneous entity embracing various language properties, the author suggests a list of issues to be considered in the comparative way. The latter include^ issues related to the study of words in their interrelationship with culture; study of changes that words acquire over time; exploration of lexical units regarding the difference in their usage and stylistic features and many others.

Key words: comparison; lexical level; word properties; differences; similarities

Comparative typology stands at the intersection of linguistics and anthropology, offering a systematic framework for the exploration of the structural features of languages across the globe. Stemming from a curiosity about the incredible diversity of human languages and a desire to uncover underlying universals amidst this diversity, comparative typology emerged as a vibrant field of inquiry. Its roots can be traced back to the pioneering work of linguists who sought to understand the relationships between languages and unravel the underlying principles governing their structure. Early comparative linguists, such as Franz Bopp and August Schleicher in the 19th century, laid the groundwork for comparative typology by proposing the existence of language families and reconstructing proto-languages based on shared features among related languages. However, it was not until the latter half of the 20th century that comparative typology truly flourished as a distinct field within linguistics. Influential figures like Joseph H. Greenberg, played pivotal roles in shaping the discipline by advocating for systematic cross-linguistic comparisons and the identification of linguistic universals.

Comparative typological investigations can be carried out in application to all levels of language structure: on the phonetic level, linguists analyze the physical properties of speech sounds, such as articulation, acoustic properties, and auditory perception; phonology, on the other hand, delves into the abstract, cognitive aspects of sound systems within languages, including phonemes, allophones, and phonological processes; morphology focuses on the structure and formation of words, including morphemes, inflectional and derivational processes, and word formation patterns; syntax studies the rules and principles governing the combination of words to form grammatical sentences, including phrase structure, word order, and syntactic relations; semantics analyzes the meanings of words, phrases, and sentences, as well as the

relationships between linguistic expressions and the world they refer to. And, finally, the lexical level of comparative typology examines the vocabulary of languages, focusing on how words are formed, used, and related to one another within and across languages. This involves studying word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.), word formation processes (such as derivation and compounding), semantic categories, and lexical borrowing. In this article we are going to delve in details of what can be the subject of study on the lexical level of a language.

Comparative study of languages at the lexical level involves analyzing the similarities and differences between two or more languages in terms of their lexical composition. The study of vocabulary, in general, and in the comparative aspect, in particular, has several important aspects. Among them, it is worthy to note those that provide: a) cultural understanding, as it allows you to understand the cultural characteristics of different languages; each language reflects the specifics of culture, customs, traditions and ideas of the people, and the study of vocabulary helps to understand these features; b) comparative study of vocabulary aimed to identify connections between different languages, their historical roots and evolution, which ultimately allows for a better understanding of the structure and development of languages; c) expansion of knowledge of the vocabulary of different languages that eventually facilitates translation and communication between people from different cultures; d) teaching focused on understanding synonyms, antonyms and nuances of words that allows one to convey meaning more accurately and efficiently; e) the development of language skills such as vocabulary, understanding of context, grammar and practical use of language; f) comparative study of vocabulary that lays the basis for further linguistic studies, including comparative linguistics, etymology and cognitive linguistics. In general, the study of vocabulary from a comparative perspective does not only help to understand language as a means of communication, but also expands cultural and linguistic understanding of the world.

The comparative study of languages at the lexical level has a long history and extensive literature. The work of scientists such as Humboldt “On the Difference in the Structure of Human Languages hence on the Spiritual Activity of Mankind,” Saussure “A Course in General Linguistics,” and other laid the foundations for researches in the field of comparative linguistics, lexicography and translation studies also to the understanding of the lexical features of language systems.

In the aforementioned works one can also find the basis for a comparative study of vocabulary. The works being related to the comparative analysis of language structures, emphasize the importance of understanding the cultural and historical context for the interpretation of lexical features which can be useful for studying similarities and differences at the lexical level.

The list of issues that can be considered in comparison at the level of vocabulary

includes the following areas:

1. Study of similarities and differences in basic vocabulary: by such investigation we can identify the words that are similar or different in two or more languages that refer to common objects, actions and concepts;

2. Studies of lexical change over time: by this study we can get the answer as to how vocabulary change in different languages over time, and define whether there are general trends or differences in this process

3. Exploring the influence of culture on vocabulary: by dealing with this issue we can observe as to how cultural characteristics are reflected in the vocabulary of different languages, and which words are unique to certain cultures or social contexts;

4. Study of borrowings and their influence: by investigating the phenomenon of loans we come to a conclusion regarding which languages have the greatest influence on the vocabulary of other languages, and how this influence manifests itself in borrowing and adapting words;

5. Learning about semantic nuances and translation helps to understand as to how the meanings of words vary across languages, and how these differences create difficulties in translating or interpreting texts;

6. Exploring differences in word usage and stylistic features is sure to identify the differences that exist in style and vocabulary usage across languages or dialects, and how these differences might reflect cultural or social norms;

7. Study of trends and innovations can give us clues as to how new words and expressions appear in different languages, and what trends in lexical development can be identified based on comparative analysis, etc;

In addition to the above, one can compare languages according to various criteria by which vocabulary units can be identified as elements of the language, including grammar, phonetics, and much more. For example, along the line of graphics, we can study the words of compared languages from the point of view of the external side of the words, whether it follows the rules of spelling and punctuation. We can also compare the spelling of words in different languages, and their compliance with the rules of pronunciation, etc. The semantic aspect of studying words in a comparative way involves comparing their systematic meaning with their meaning in context. As for grammatical aspect, it includes word form, morphology and syntax. Here we can compare word forms (e.g. singular/plural, tense, person, etc.) and their syntactic function in a sentence. The pragmatic aspect of a word, includes its use in real-life circumstances and communication strategies. This covers the issues related to communication, the speaker's intentions, the influence of context on meaning, etc. Another aspect is the etymology of a word which studies its origin, history and the linguistic roots associated with it. Comparing the etymology of words in different languages can reveal their similarities or differences in cultural influences and

historical contexts. To speak about a word's features we should not overlook its frequency: This aspect refers to the frequency of use of a word in a language. Some words are used more often than others, and analyzing this frequency can provide insight into the importance of a word in a language and its role in communication. The aspect related to associations and connotations is connected with the emotional and associative meanings of the word, as well as its figurative content. Different languages may have different associations and connotations for the same word, reflecting cultural differences and nuanced perceptions. And, finally, idioms and expressions: Studying set expressions and idioms helps to understand the specifics of each language and its cultural characteristics. Comparison of idioms from different languages reveals unique ways of expressing thoughts and ideas, thus, helping to understand the similarities and differences between languages and their cultures.

To conclude, a word is a heterogeneous entity, which is why it has various features that can be compared with similar features of words in other languages. These features include phonetic, morphological, semantic and syntactic characteristics. For example, words from different languages may have similar sound structures or common roots, indicating similarities in their origins. However, words may have different meanings or be used in different contexts, which indicates differences in semantics and syntax. Thus, a word is a complex and multifaceted unit that reflects the diversity of linguistic systems and cultural characteristics.

Literature

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