

A Comparative-Typological Study of Variant Units in Uzbek and Russian

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ABSTRACT

This article comparatively investigates the linguistic nature, formation factors, and functional characteristics of variant units in the Uzbek and Russian languages. Variation is interpreted as a phenomenon manifested at different levels of the language system that expands the formal and semantic possibilities of speech. The study analyzes the specific features of phonetic, lexical, morphological, and grammatical variants in Uzbek and Russian and identifies their common and distinctive characteristics. Particular attention is also paid to the relationship between variants and literary language norms, stylistic properties, frequency of use, and communicative functions. The comparative analysis demonstrates that variation in both languages possesses universal as well as language-specific features. It is shown that the agglutinative structure of Uzbek and the inflectional structure of Russian give rise to certain differences in the formation and use of variant units. The findings of the study are of theoretical and practical significance for comparative studies of Uzbek and Russian, translation studies, lexicography, and language teaching methodology.

Keywords: Variation, variant unit, linguistic variation, Uzbek language, Russian language, comparative linguistics, phonetic variant, lexical variant, morphological variant, grammatical variant, language norm, stylistic characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a complex system that reflects the social, cultural, and communicative needs of society, and its development is characterized by continuous movement and change. Linguistic units do not necessarily remain in a single form over extended periods; rather, under the influence of historical development, regional differences, social environment, communicative needs, language contact, and communicative situations, they may acquire different forms. The use of linguistic units that express the same or closely related meaning or function in several formal realizations gives rise to the phenomenon of variation. Therefore, the study of variant units makes it possible to identify the internal patterns of language development, processes of norm formation, and the causes of formal diversity in speech.

Variation is a multifaceted phenomenon that manifests itself at different levels of the language system. It can be observed within phonetic, lexical, morphological, and grammatical units. In some cases, the difference between variants concerns only their sound composition, whereas in others, changes may involve their morphemic structure, grammatical form, or stylistic characteristics. Although such units are generally related in terms of meaning, they may differ with regard to their sphere of use, communicative function, stylistic coloring, and normative status.

The issue of variation is particularly significant in the comparative study of genetically unrelated languages. Uzbek and Russian belong to different language families and differ considerably in their grammatical structures, morphological systems, and word-formation patterns. Uzbek belongs to the Karluk branch of the Turkic language family and is generally characterized as an agglutinative language, whereas Russian belongs to the Slavic branch of the Indo-European language family and is predominantly inflectional in structure. These typological differences give rise to specific features in the formation and functional use of variant units in the two languages.

In Uzbek, the formation of variants is influenced by phonetic processes, historical changes, the interaction between dialects

and the literary language, language contact, and the development and refinement of literary language norms. In Russian, alongside phonetic and morphological changes, historical development, regional and social differentiation, and the distinction between colloquial and bookish forms of speech constitute important factors in the emergence and distribution of variants. From this perspective, a comparison of the linguistic data of the two languages makes it possible to identify not only the general principles underlying variation but also the mechanisms specific to each language.

The relevance of the topic is determined by the need in contemporary linguistics to examine language variation not merely as a formal phenomenon but also as a process associated with the functional and communicative potential of language. At present, language norms, speech culture, changes in vocabulary, and the expansion of various communicative environments increasingly influence the scope and distribution of variants. In particular, the development of mass media, Internet communication, social networks, and translation activities contributes to the increased use of certain variants while restricting the distribution of others.

Determining the normative status of variant units constitutes another important aspect of the study. Not all forms expressing the same or similar meanings have an equal status from the perspective of the literary language. Some variants are fully accepted within the literary norm, whereas others are restricted to particular styles, communicative contexts, or geographical areas. Certain forms may also survive as historical or obsolete linguistic units. Therefore, identifying the existence of variants alone is insufficient; it is also necessary to determine under what conditions, with what meaning, at what frequency, and in which stylistic contexts they are used.

The long-standing sociocultural interaction between Uzbek and Russian further increases the relevance of this issue. Bilingual environments, translation practices, educational processes, and scientific and official communication contribute to increasing interaction between the two languages. Such interaction may influence the formal realization of certain

linguistic units, their frequency of use, and their stylistic characteristics. Consequently, a comparative study of variation based on Uzbek and Russian linguistic materials is important not only for theoretical linguistics but also for practical language-related fields.

The aim of this study is to identify the linguistic characteristics of variant units in Uzbek and Russian, classify them according to language levels and functional properties, and comparatively analyze their common and distinctive features on the basis of data from the two languages.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been established:

- to clarify the theoretical content of the concepts of variation and variant unit;
- to classify the principal manifestations of variation in Uzbek and Russian;
- to analyze the characteristics of phonetic, lexical, morphological, and grammatical variants;
- to identify the linguistic and extralinguistic factors contributing to the emergence of variants;
- to determine the common and distinctive features of variant units in Uzbek and Russian;
- to examine the relationship between variants, literary language norms, and functional styles;
- to identify the functional potential of variant units in contemporary speech.

The object of the study is variant units used in the Uzbek and Russian languages.

The subject of the study comprises the structural, semantic, functional, stylistic, and normative characteristics of variant units.

The study employs descriptive, comparative-typological, contextual, componential, and linguostatistical methods of analysis. The descriptive method is used to reveal the formal and semantic characteristics of variant units, while the comparative-

typological method serves to identify similarities and differences between the two languages. Contextual analysis makes it possible to determine the conditions under which variants are used in actual speech. The linguostatistical approach, in turn, provides an opportunity to determine the frequency and degree of activity of particular variants.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the analysis of variant units in Uzbek and Russian at several linguistic levels according to unified comparative criteria, taking into account not only their formal differences but also their semantic, functional, stylistic, and normative characteristics. Particular attention is also devoted to the influence of the typological properties of the two languages and language contact on the manifestation of variation.

The findings of the study can be applied to comparative research on Uzbek and Russian, the study of language norms, lexicographic practice, translation, and language teaching. In particular, identifying the functional and stylistic characteristics of variants may be of practical value to translators, language instructors, and researchers in the field of philology.

Thus, a comparative study of variant units in Uzbek and Russian is not limited to identifying the specific characteristics of the two languages. It also contributes to a deeper understanding of the general principles of linguistic variation, the relationship between norms and variants, and the role of formal diversity in the development of language.

Albatta. Quyidagi qism ham avvalgi Abstract va Introduction bilan terminologik jihatdan bir xil uslubda, ilmiy maqola uchun tabiiy akademik ingliz tilida tarjima qilindi.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE TOPIC

Language variation and the issue of variant forms have been among the important problems investigated in linguistics worldwide for many years. This phenomenon is characterized by the realization of linguistic units in different forms while retaining the same or closely related functional and semantic value. In explaining the nature of variation, the relationship

between variant and invariant, language norms, actual speech usage, and functional differentiation are regarded as important theoretical foundations.

W. Labov examined linguistic variation in relation to social and communicative factors and demonstrated that the occurrence of different variants of a linguistic unit is not accidental but rather a systematic phenomenon determined by specific linguistic and extralinguistic conditions [1: 208-209]. This approach indicates that variant units should be studied not merely on the basis of their formal differences but also in relation to speech situations, style, and social environment. In this respect, Labov's concept provides an important methodological basis for a comparative analysis of the functional characteristics of variants in Uzbek and Russian.

In Russian linguistics, the issue of variation has been extensively studied, particularly in terms of the relationship between word variants and literary language norms. K. S. Gorbachevich regards variation as one of the natural manifestations of language development and emphasizes that the identification of variants should take into account their formal similarity, semantic unity, and functional relationship [2: 7-20]. The scholar distinguishes variants according to their phonemic, accentological, and morphological characteristics and considers their status within the literary language norm as a separate criterion [2: 21-34].

K. S. Gorbachevich also pays particular attention to distinguishing variants from synonyms. According to his approach, variants preserve the common identifying characteristics of the same linguistic unit, whereas their formal differences arise as a result of phonetic, accentological, or grammatical changes [2: 10-15]. This approach is particularly relevant to the present study because it makes it possible to distinguish variant units in Uzbek and Russian from synonymous linguistic units.

F. P. Filin & K. S. Gorbachevich interpret variation in connection with the formation and development of language norms. The researchers demonstrate that the existence of variants reflects the dynamic nature of the literary language system and

that some variants may acquire normative status over time, while others may gradually disappear from active use [3: 5-15]. This view suggests that variation should not be regarded as a static phenomenon but rather as a process that changes in accordance with the development of the language.

R. P. Rogozhnikova conducted a specialized study of word variants in Russian, focusing on their formal characteristics, mutual relationships, and possibilities of use [4: 5-12]. Within her approach, formal differences between variants belonging to the same linguistic unit are regarded as one of the principal criteria. This perspective is important for systematizing lexical variants and identifying the nature of their formal modifications.

In contemporary research, variation is also interpreted in relation to the mechanisms of language development. Yu. V. Dorofeyev connects variation in Russian with different forms of language existence and notes that regional, social, territorial, and national factors influence the formation and distribution of variants [5: 209-223]. The author emphasizes that different forms of variation are united by a common invariant basis that integrates them within a single language system [5: 209-223]. This perspective makes it possible to investigate variant units not as an arbitrary collection of separate forms but as interconnected elements of a unified linguistic system.

In Uzbek linguistics, the problem of variation has been studied in relation to formal and functional differences manifested at different levels of the language system. In particular, phonetic variants in Uzbek have been explained in terms of sound alternation, sound deletion, sound insertion, phonetic adaptation, and regional differences in pronunciation. This approach demonstrates that both internal patterns of language development and regional and speech-related factors play an important role in the emergence of variants.

Comparative studies of phonological variants in Uzbek and Russian also shed light on certain aspects of the problem of variation. Research in this area has compared the structural, linguostylistic, cognitive-semantic, and linguocultural characteristics of phonological variants in the two languages. These studies demonstrate the significance of processes such as

sound alternation, deletion, insertion, and the phonetic adaptation of borrowed units in the formation of phonetic variants.

A comparison of Uzbek and Russian shows that the structural characteristics of the two languages directly influence the forms in which variation is manifested. The agglutinative structure of Uzbek allows grammatical variants to be formed predominantly through affixal means, whereas the inflectional character of Russian facilitates the active manifestation of internal changes in grammatical forms and morphological alternations. Therefore, a comparison of variant units in the two languages requires not only the identification of their common features but also consideration of the differences resulting from their respective typological structures.

A synthesis of existing studies indicates that three principal approaches have emerged in the investigation of variation. The first approach takes the formal characteristics of variants as the primary criterion. The second focuses on the normative and stylistic status of variants. The third examines the social, regional, and communicative conditioning of variants. Each of these approaches reveals a particular aspect of the phenomenon of variation.

However, a substantial proportion of existing studies focuses on a particular type of variation, especially phonetic, accentological, or lexical variants. The issue of conducting a comprehensive comparative analysis of variant units in Uzbek and Russian across the phonetic, lexical, morphological, and grammatical levels, while evaluating their semantic, functional, stylistic, and normative characteristics within a unified analytical framework, has not yet been sufficiently systematized.

From this perspective, the present study extends existing theoretical approaches by examining variant units in Uzbek and Russian on the basis of a multidimensional comparative model. Within this framework, the formal difference, semantic proximity, functional role, stylistic characteristics, normative status, and frequency of use of variants are analyzed in an interconnected manner. Such an approach makes it possible to identify not only the general principles governing variation in the two languages but also their specific national and linguistic characteristics.

Thus, the review of the literature demonstrates that variation is closely associated with the dynamic nature of the language system, the changing character of linguistic norms, and communicative needs. These theoretical foundations provide the methodological basis for a comparative analysis of variant units in Uzbek and Russian.

Albatta. Bu qismni ham avvalgi bo'limlar bilan bir xil ilmiy uslub, terminologik izchillik va maqola strukturasi asosida inglizchaga o'g'iraman. Misollar va olimlarning fikrlari saqlanadi.

RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical basis of the study consists of variant units used in the Uzbek and Russian languages. In selecting the material, priority was given to units that have the same or closely related functional and semantic value but differ in their phonetic, lexical, or grammatical form. Formal similarity alone was not regarded as a sufficient criterion for identifying variation. The units considered as variants were required to demonstrate a close relationship in terms of meaning, functional role, or their position within the language system.

The research materials were compiled separately for the two languages and subsequently analyzed according to a unified comparative classification. For the Uzbek material, current literary language dictionaries, grammatical sources, and written texts representing different genres were used. Russian-language material was selected according to the same principles. This approach makes it possible to compare the materials of the two languages according to identical criteria. Particular attention was paid to distinguishing between the occurrence of a variant as a dictionary entry and its actual use in speech.

The individual variant unit and its contextual realization were taken as the basic units of analysis. In other words, linguistic units were examined not in isolation from the dictionary but, whenever possible, together with their actual contexts of use. This approach makes it possible to determine not only the formal differences between variants but also the contexts, styles, and functional loads associated with their use.

In classifying variant units, the linguistic level was established as the principal criterion. Accordingly, the materials were divided into phonetic, lexical, morphological, and grammatical variants. However, this classification was not treated as a rigidly bounded system but rather as a working classification based on the dominant characteristic of each variant. This is because some variants may simultaneously exhibit phonetic and morphological or lexical and stylistic differences.

In identifying phonetic variants, sound alternation, deletion, addition, and differences in pronunciation were taken into consideration. In the case of lexical variants, the preservation of the same denotative or functional meaning of the lexical unit, alongside formal differences, was regarded as the principal criterion. For morphological and grammatical variants, the analysis focused on the preservation of grammatical meaning and its realization through different forms.

The comparative-typological method was employed as the central research method. It was used to identify similarities and differences between variant units in Uzbek and Russian. The comparison took into account the grammatical structures of the two languages, their word-formation and form-formation mechanisms, phonetic systems, and lexical characteristics. In this process, externally similar phenomena in the two languages were not assumed to have identical underlying linguistic mechanisms.

The descriptive method was used to identify the structural and semantic characteristics of variant units. For each unit, its variant form, basic meaning, sphere of use, and normative status were described. The descriptive results served as the initial basis for subsequent comparative analysis.

Contextual analysis was employed to determine the functional characteristics of variants. Their use in specific textual contexts made it possible to establish whether they were stylistically neutral or marked, whether they belonged to colloquial or bookish speech, and whether certain variants were restricted to particular communicative situations. Thus, the distinction between the lexical status of a variant and its status in actual speech was also taken into consideration.

Componential analysis was used to identify semantic relationships between variants. The analysis isolated the semantic features shared by variants and, where necessary, identified additional semantic or stylistic components that distinguished them. This was particularly important for distinguishing variation from synonymy. Not all formally similar or synonymous units can be classified as variants from a methodological perspective.

A normative analysis was employed to determine the relationship between variants and the literary language. This analysis considered the registration of units in dictionaries, their sphere of use, and their normative status. Variants may be distinguished as units belonging to the active literary norm, parallel forms, stylistically restricted units, or forms of historical character. Therefore, the evaluation of variation was not limited to the opposition between “normative” and “non-normative”; the functional status of each variant was also taken into account.

At the quantitative stage of the study, the distribution of variants according to linguistic level and functional characteristics was calculated. Statistical indicators made it possible to determine which types of variation occurred most frequently in the analyzed material. However, quantitative data were not interpreted as an independent criterion for drawing conclusions but rather as evidence complementing the qualitative analysis.

In the analytical process, variant units were examined according to the following sequence:

formal difference → common semantic feature → functional relationship → stylistic characteristics → normative status → comparative status in the two languages.

This sequence makes it possible to interpret variation not merely as the existence of two different forms, but as a relationship between form, meaning, function, and norm. This perspective is particularly important when comparing the linguistic materials of Uzbek and Russian.

The methodological position of the study is based on the assumption that variant units should not be regarded as peripheral

or accidental phenomena within the language system but as linguistic elements that demonstrate the internal potential for variation inherent in a language. At the same time, the existence of variants does not imply their absolute equivalence: they may differ in frequency of use, stylistic value, normative status, and communicative potential.

On this basis, the subsequent analysis of the collected material was aimed at determining the linguistic levels at which variation is most actively manifested in Uzbek and Russian, the factors underlying the formation of variants, and the similarities and differences in their functional and stylistic distribution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The subsequent stage of the study focused on identifying lexical variant units in Uzbek and Russian and comparatively analyzing their functional characteristics. Unlike phonetic variation, lexical variation is not limited to differences in sound composition but may also involve the lexical form of a unit, its sphere of use, stylistic coloring, and, in some cases, historical and regional characteristics. The principal criterion was the presence of semantic proximity between variants and their realization as different formal manifestations of the same linguistic unit.

In identifying lexical variants, formal difference alone was not considered a sufficient criterion. The common semantic feature shared by variants, their functional role, and their relationship within the language system were taken into consideration simultaneously. From this perspective, distinguishing lexical variation from synonymy is of particular importance. While synonymy is primarily characterized by a semantic relationship between different lexemes, variants preserve the identifying and semantic basis of the same linguistic unit.

The Russian-language material clearly demonstrates this distinction. For example, in the pair *мамrac* – *мамрау*, the formal difference results from the alternation of consonants, while the general lexical meaning of the units remains unchanged. The use of both variants can also be observed in

literary texts. In F. M. Dostoevsky's *The Bad Joke* (*Скверный анекдот*), the form *матрас* occurs, whereas in L. N. Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, the form *матраца* is found. These examples demonstrate the actual occurrence of variants in authentic speech and literary material.

Similarly, the variants *кринка* – *крынка* demonstrate both formal differences and historical and regional characteristics of usage. The form *кринку* occurs in N. M. Karamzin's *Poor Liza* (*Бедная Лиза*), whereas the form *крынки* is found in N. V. Gogol's *Dead Souls* (*Мёртвые души*). These examples demonstrate that variants are not merely parallel forms recorded in dictionaries but linguistic units that have been actively used within particular historical periods and literary contexts.

The pair *галоши* – *калоши* more clearly demonstrates the normative and functional aspects of variation. According to the analyzed material, the form *галоши* occurs in a work by M. Yu. Lermontov, whereas the form *калошах* is found in a work by L. N. Tolstoy. Although these units were used in parallel in historical speech practice, their functional status is not identical from the perspective of the contemporary literary language. Therefore, in analyzing variants, it is necessary to consider not only their existence but also their normative status and stylistic use during a particular historical period.

K. S. Gorbachevich's view that variants are not freely interchangeable units and that their distribution is determined by particular functional and stylistic restrictions provides an important theoretical basis for interpreting these materials. The distribution of variants in speech may be associated with communicative situations, stylistic requirements, and established patterns of usage.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the pair *галоша* – *калоша*. The analyzed material indicates that *галоша* is more frequently used in scientific, professional, and official-administrative contexts, whereas *калоша* occurs in colloquial speech. Thus, the functional distribution of formally similar units constitutes an important factor in determining their status within the literary language system. In this case, variation is manifested in close interaction with the language norm.

V. V. Vinogradov's theoretical views concerning the formation of literary language norms under the influence of speech practice and social needs also provide an explanation for this process. The prolonged use of variants and the more active distribution of one of them across different functional styles may eventually contribute to the establishment of a particular form as normative. Therefore, variation should not be considered a phenomenon isolated from the formation of norms but rather as an integral component of the development of the literary language.

The research material demonstrates that historical development, phonetic alternation, and the adaptation of borrowed units to the linguistic system play an important role in the formation of lexical variants in Russian. For example, the forms *бриллиант* – *брильянт*, *фортепиано* – *фортепьяно*, *тоннель* – *туннель*, and *ноль* – *нуль* have emerged through various phonetic or historical processes. Some of these variants have retained the possibility of parallel use in contemporary speech, whereas others have become restricted in terms of their normative or stylistic status.

From this perspective, lexical variation cannot be adequately interpreted merely as “two forms of one word.” The frequency of variants in actual speech, their stylistic marking, historical period, and status within the literary language norm also determine their functional nature. Consequently, in identifying variant units, their speech functions should be considered alongside formal differences as one of the principal analytical criteria.

The analysis of Uzbek-language material also demonstrates a close relationship between phonetic and lexical levels of variation. In units such as *бадтар* – *баттар*, *бек* – *без*, *беъмано* – *бемаъни*, formal differences have emerged as a result of phonetic changes. Such units may develop under the influence of articulatory convenience, phonetic simplification, speech economy, and, in some cases, regional speech patterns.

An important characteristic of variants in Uzbek is that a distinction may arise between a form actively used in spoken language and a form standardized by the literary language. In

such cases, one variant may remain in common or regionally restricted speech, whereas another becomes established as the principal form of the literary language. Therefore, the analysis of Uzbek variant units also requires a distinction between their regional, stylistic, and normative status.

The comparative analysis of Uzbek and Russian materials demonstrates the existence of both common and language-specific characteristics of lexical variation. The common feature is that variants in both languages emerge under the influence of historical development, phonetic processes, language contact, communicative needs, and processes of standardization. The differences are manifested primarily in the mechanisms of variant formation and their functional distribution. In Russian, the inflectional system and historical phonetic processes play a significant role in the formation of variants, whereas in Uzbek, the agglutinative structure, phonetic simplification, speech economy, and characteristics of the affixal system are particularly significant.

The analysis demonstrates that the existence of variants does not imply that they have an absolutely equal status. For example, although the forms *галоша* – *калоша* were historically used in parallel, their functional and normative status differs in contemporary usage. Similarly, the pairs *матрас* – *матрац*, *крынка* – *қрынкa*, *ноль* – *нуль*, and *тоннель* – *туннель* may differ in their spheres of use and degree of activity. Therefore, the principal criterion of variation should not be limited to the existence of parallel forms; it should also include their relationship to a single linguistic unit, their common semantic basis, and their functional potential.

These findings are consistent with A. D. Schweitzer's views concerning the role of social and professional differentiation, age-related factors, functional styles, and literary genres in the formation and distribution of variants. At the same time, as K. S. Gorbachevich emphasizes, variation cannot be explained solely by external social factors. The internal patterns of language development, historical changes, and the formation of literary language norms also determine the emergence of variants and their subsequent development.

Thus, the research findings demonstrate the need to analyze lexical variation on the basis of the interaction between form, meaning, function, and norm. The establishment of some variants within the literary language, the stylistic restriction of others, and the gradual decline in the activity of certain forms demonstrate the dynamic nature of language development. In this sense, variation should not be regarded as instability within the language system but rather as a natural mechanism that maintains a balance between the internal potential of language and communicative needs.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of variant units in Uzbek and Russian demonstrates that variation is a complex linguistic phenomenon manifested at different levels of the language system and associated not only with formal differences but also with semantic proximity, functional commonality, and normative status. Although variant units may express the same meaning through different phonetic, lexical, or grammatical forms, their spheres of use are not necessarily completely identical.

The analysis of the examined material has demonstrated that phonetic variation in both Uzbek and Russian is associated with factors such as articulatory convenience, phonetic simplification, historical development, dialectal influence, and speech traditions. The Russian forms *галоши/калоши*, *матрас/матрац*, *тоннель/туннель*, *кринка/крынка*, as well as the Uzbek forms *бадтар/баттар*, *бек/бег*, *беъмано/бемаъни*, demonstrate that both internal processes of language development and sociostylistic factors play an important role in the formation and use of phonetic variants.

The comparative analysis has also revealed functional differences between variant units. Some variants are used within the active layer of the literary language and are appropriate for particular functional styles, whereas others are associated with colloquial, historical-literary, or otherwise restricted speech environments. Therefore, a purely formal comparison of variant forms is insufficient; their stylistic characteristics,

communicative functions, and normative status must also be taken into account.

The common feature of variation in Uzbek and Russian is that the emergence and active use of variants in both languages are closely connected with language development and processes of standardization. The differences are manifested primarily in the factors underlying variant formation and their functional and stylistic distribution. In particular, the different use of Russian variants in historical and literary sources clearly demonstrates their relationship with particular periods and styles, whereas Uzbek examples more frequently reveal the influence of phonetic simplification, articulatory convenience, and dialectal factors.

Thus, the comparative study of variant units contributes to identifying variation processes in the phonetic and lexical systems of Uzbek and Russian, the specific features of language norm formation, and the functional and stylistic potential of variants. The transition of variants from active to passive use is determined by their frequency in speech, stylistic compatibility, and relationship to literary language norms. This provides grounds for regarding variation as a natural manifestation of language development.

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