

Functional-Semantic and Combinatorial Syntax of Syntactically Independent Elements in English and Uzbek

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the functional-semantic and combinatorial properties of syntactically independent elements in English and Uzbek. The study focuses on linguistic units that demonstrate relative syntactic autonomy while participating actively in the semantic, communicative, and pragmatic organization of the utterance. Particular attention is paid to introductory and parenthetical elements, modal units, interjections, vocatives, detached constructions, and prepositional combinations functioning beyond the core predicative structure. The research combines functional-semantic, comparative, structural, contextual, and combinatorial approaches. The analysis demonstrates that syntactic independence does not imply complete semantic or communicative isolation. On the contrary, independently functioning elements may modify the propositional content, express the speaker's attitude, establish interpersonal relations, organize discourse, or specify semantic relations between constituents. The comparison of English and Uzbek reveals both common functional principles and language-specific patterns. English generally demonstrates a more restricted positional organization because of its relatively fixed word order, whereas Uzbek permits greater positional mobility and relies more extensively on contextual and prosodic factors. Particular attention is also given to prepositions in English and their Uzbek functional equivalents, including postpositional and case-marking structures. The study argues that the functional-semantic and combinatorial analysis of

syntactically independent elements provides a productive framework for revealing the interaction between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in typologically different languages.

Keywords: Syntactically independent elements, functional semantics, combinatorial syntax, English syntax, Uzbek syntax, introductory elements, parenthetical constructions, modal words, interjections, vocatives, prepositions, postpositions, syntactic position, semantic function, communicative function.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern syntactic research increasingly recognizes that sentence structure cannot be adequately described exclusively through the obligatory relations established between the subject, predicate, object, and complement. Alongside these central components, sentences contain a number of elements that demonstrate a comparatively independent structural status while making a substantial contribution to the meaning and communicative organization of the utterance. Such elements include introductory units, parenthetical constructions, modal expressions, interjections, vocatives, detached components, and various peripheral constructions.

The problem of syntactic independence is particularly important because structural autonomy does not necessarily correspond to semantic or communicative autonomy. An element may be excluded from the obligatory syntactic frame of a sentence but still influence the interpretation of the entire proposition. This relationship between structural form and functional meaning requires an analysis that goes beyond traditional grammatical classification.

In contemporary English grammar, the distinction between more integrated constituents and more loosely connected supplementary elements is particularly significant. Huddleston & Pullum distinguish integrated modifiers from supplements, emphasizing that supplements have a looser syntactic relationship with the clause [2]. Their classification also

demonstrates that peripheral elements may perform modal, evaluative, connective, and speech-act functions.

A similar problem arises in the analysis of English clause structure. Quirk et al. distinguish the major functional elements of the clause – subject, verb, object, complement, and adverbial – and demonstrate that adverbials may occupy initial, medial, or final positions. They also distinguish sentence adverbials that comment on the whole clause from elements more closely integrated into clause structure [1].

In Uzbek linguistics, syntax is traditionally associated with the rules governing the combination of word forms and with the sentence as the structural whole in which these relations are realized [5]. Mahmudov and Nurmonov's *O'zbek tilining nazariy grammatikasi (sintaksis)* is one of the important theoretical sources for the description of Uzbek syntactic structure [5].

The comparative study of English and Uzbek is therefore significant because the two languages differ considerably in their syntactic organization. English predominantly relies on relatively fixed constituent order, whereas Uzbek allows greater positional mobility. These differences affect the combinatorial behavior of elements that stand at the periphery of the sentence.

The present study aims to investigate the functional-semantic and combinatorial properties of syntactically independent elements in English and Uzbek and to determine the ways in which their structural independence interacts with semantic and communicative functions.

The research addresses the following objectives:

1. to define the functional and structural characteristics of syntactically independent elements;
2. to classify these elements according to their functional-semantic properties;
3. to examine their positional distribution in English and Uzbek;
4. to analyze their combinatorial relationships with the predicative core;
5. to investigate the functional role of prepositions and their Uzbek equivalents;

6. to identify similarities and differences between English and Uzbek;
7. to formulate a functional-combinatorial model of syntactic independence.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research employs a combination of structural, functional-semantic, comparative, contextual, and combinatorial methods.

1. **The structural method** is used to determine the position of independent elements in relation to the predicative core of the sentence. The analysis distinguishes initial, medial, and final positions and examines whether positional variation affects semantic interpretation.
2. **The functional-semantic method** is used to establish the meanings performed by independent elements. These include modality, evaluation, emotional expression, address, discourse connection, and pragmatic qualification.
3. **The comparative method** allows the functional and structural properties of English and Uzbek elements to be examined against each other. The method is particularly important because identical or similar communicative functions may be realized through structurally different mechanisms.
4. **The combinatorial method** is central to the research. It examines what types of syntactic units can combine with an independent element, what positions the element may occupy, and what semantic relations emerge as a result of such combinations.

The analysis is organized around four parameters

Parameter	Main question
Structural	Where does the element occur in the sentence?
Functional-semantic	What meaning does it contribute?
Communicative-pragmatic	What does it express about the speaker's intention or attitude?
Combinatorial	What linguistic units can it combine with?

Such a model makes it possible to consider syntactic independence not as a purely formal category but as a multidimensional linguistic phenomenon.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Syntactic independence as a relative structural property*

Syntactic independence should not be understood as complete isolation from the sentence. An independent element may lack an obligatory syntactic relation with the predicative core but remain functionally connected with the proposition as a whole.

Consider the following examples:

English: "Perhaps, he will come tomorrow."

Uzbek: *Ehtimol, u ertaga keladi.*

The removal of "perhaps" or *ehtimol* does not make the sentence grammatically incomplete:

"He will come tomorrow."

U ertagakeladi.

However, the semantic interpretation changes. The basic proposition remains, while the speaker's degree of certainty disappears.

Thus, the independent element is structurally optional but functionally meaningful.

This distinction is essential for a functional-semantic interpretation of syntactic independence. The element does not form part of the obligatory propositional structure, but it modifies the speaker's presentation of that proposition.

The relationship may therefore be represented as:

syntactic autonomy → semantic modification → communicative qualification

This three-stage relationship is characteristic of many independent elements in both languages.

3.2. *Functional-semantic types of independent elements*

The comparative analysis allows several major functional-semantic groups to be distinguished.

3.2.1. *Modal elements*

Modal elements express certainty, probability, doubt, assumption, or the speaker's assessment of the validity of the proposition.

English: "Certainly, the problem can be solved."

Uzbek: *Albatta, muammonihalqilishmumkin.*

The words "certainly" and *albatta* do not function as subject, object, or predicate. Their primary function is to establish the speaker's modal attitude toward the proposition.

This corresponds to the broader functional classification of peripheral elements in English grammar, where modal and evaluative adverbials are recognized as semantically distinct categories [1; 8].

3.2.2. *Evaluative elements*

Evaluative elements express the speaker's positive or negative assessment of an event.

English: "Fortunately, nobody was injured."

Uzbek: *Yaxshiyamki, hechkimjarohatlanmadi.*

The proposition "nobody was injured" represents the factual information. The element "fortunately" adds the speaker's evaluation.

The same relationship exists in Uzbek. *Yaxshiyamki* does not constitute a structural component of the predicative relation but establishes an evaluative interpretation of the event. Therefore:

proposition + evaluation = expanded communicative meaning

3.2.3. *Interjections*

Interjections are characterized by a particularly high degree of syntactic autonomy.

English: "Oh, I forgot the book."
 Uzbek: *Voy, kitobni unutibman.*

The interjections *oh* and *voy* do not enter obligatory grammatical relations with the clause. Their function is primarily emotional and pragmatic.

Their presence introduces the speaker's immediate reaction to the situation. Consequently, interjections demonstrate that syntactic independence may be accompanied by strong pragmatic integration.

3.2.4. *Vocatives*

Vocative elements establish the relationship between speaker and addressee.

English: "John, please come here."
 Uzbek: *Jon, buyergakel.*

The vocative is not an argument of the predicate *come* or *kel-*. Nevertheless, it is communicatively essential because it identifies the intended addressee.

The functional model can be expressed as:

proposition + addressee orientation → communicative act

This demonstrates that syntactic independence can coexist with communicative necessity.

3.3. *Positional combinatorics*

One of the most significant characteristics of independent elements is positional mobility.

English allows the modal element *perhaps* to occur in several positions:

Perhaps, she knows the answer.
 She, perhaps, knows the answer.
 She knows the answer, perhaps.

The semantic core remains relatively stable, although the pragmatic prominence of the element may change.

This positional flexibility is consistent with descriptions of English adverbials as elements that can occur initially, medially, or finally, although not every adverbial has identical positional possibilities [1].

Uzbek similarly permits positional variation:

Ehtimol, u javobni biladi.

U, ehtimol, javobni biladi.

U javobnibiladi, ehtimol.

However, positional change in Uzbek can be more closely associated with intonation and information structure.

The comparison may therefore be formulated as follows:

Position	English	Uzbek
Initial	Highly productive	Highly productive
Medial	Productive but structurally constrained	Highly productive
Final	Context-dependent	Relatively productive
Prosodic influence	Significant	Very significant

Thus, combinatorial syntax includes not only the ability to combine with other units but also the ability to occupy different structural positions.

3.4. *Independent elements and the predicative core*

The relationship between the independent element and the predicative core represents one of the most important aspects of their syntactic characterization.

Compare:

“Unfortunately, the experiment failed”

Afsuski, tajribamuvaffaqiyatsiztugadi.

The elements “unfortunately” and *afsuski* are not required to form a grammatically complete sentence. Their removal produces:

“The experiment failed.”
Tajribamuvaffaqiyatsiztugadi.

Nevertheless, the communicative meaning is altered because the speaker’s emotional evaluation disappears.

This supports the principle that syntactic non-obligatoriness does not equal semantic irrelevance.

Huddleston & Pullum’s distinction between integrated modifiers and more loosely connected supplements provides an important theoretical basis for understanding this relationship [2].

3.5. Parenthetical constructions

Parenthetical constructions represent another important type of syntactically independent element.

English: “The decision, in my opinion, was reasonable.”
 Uzbek: *Qaror, meningfikrimcha, to‘g‘riedi.*

The parenthetical expressions “in my opinion” and *meningfikrimcha* introduce the source or perspective of evaluation.

Their removal does not destroy the grammatical structure:

“The decision was reasonable.”
Qarorto‘g‘riedi.

But the epistemic and evaluative dimension is weakened.

Consequently, parenthetical constructions may be viewed as secondary semantic operators over the proposition.

Their combinatorial potential is relatively broad because they can occur with:

- declarative clauses;
- interrogative clauses;
- complex sentences;
- nominal predicates;
- verbal predicates;
- evaluative statements.

This broad distribution confirms that their functional relationship is often established with the whole proposition rather than with a single constituent.

3.6. *The functional-semantic status of prepositions*

The problem of syntactic independence also becomes important in the analysis of English prepositions.

Unlike introductory or parenthetical elements, prepositions are normally structurally dependent on the phrases in which they participate. They therefore should not be treated as syntactically independent elements in the same sense.

Nevertheless, their functional-semantic and combinatorial properties make them important for the comparative analysis.

English prepositions establish relations such as:

place:	in the room
direction:	to the university
time:	after the lecture
instrument:	with a pen
cause:	because of the rain

The preposition combines with a complement and forms a prepositional phrase. Contemporary English grammar treats prepositions and prepositional phrases as a distinct structural category, and the Cambridge Grammar includes a separate chapter devoted to prepositions and prepositional phrases [2].

The Uzbek equivalents of these relations are frequently expressed through case forms, postpositions, or combinations of both. Compare:

English:	“in the room”
Uzbek:	<i>xonada</i>
English:	“to the university”
Uzbek:	<i>universitetga</i>
English:	“with a friend”
Uzbek:	<i>do‘st bilan</i>

Here, English predominantly uses prepositions, whereas Uzbek frequently expresses equivalent relations through case suffixes or postpositions.

This difference is highly significant from a combinatorial perspective.

3.7. *Prepositions and Uzbek case forms*

The English–Uzbek comparison demonstrates that semantic equivalence does not necessarily correspond to structural equivalence. For example: in the house → *uyda*

The English preposition *in* combines with a noun phrase, while Uzbek expresses the corresponding locative meaning through the *-da* case marker. Similarly: to the school → *maktabga*

The English preposition “to” combines with the noun phrase “the school,” while Uzbek employs the directional case suffix *-ga*. Another example is: with a friend → *do'st bilan*

English “with” functions as a preposition, whereas Uzbek *bilan* follows the noun and therefore behaves as a postpositional element.

This can be represented as:

Semantic relation	English	Uzbek	Structural mechanism
Location	in the room	<i>xonada</i>	preposition/case
Direction	to the school	<i>maktabga</i>	preposition/case
Instrument/association	with a pen	<i>ruchkabilan</i>	preposition/ postposition
Source	from the city	<i>shahardan</i>	preposition/ case
Object of relation	about the problem	<i>muammohaqida</i>	preposition/ postposition

The comparison shows that combinatorial syntax is language-specific even when functional-semantic relations are equivalent.

3.8. *Syntactic independence and semantic dependence*

One of the principal findings of the study is that structural independence and semantic dependence should be distinguished.

An independent element may have no obligatory syntactic relation with the predicate but remain semantically dependent on the proposition. For example: “Perhaps, he is right.”

The word “perhaps” is structurally peripheral, but its scope extends over the entire proposition “he is right.” Similarly: *Ehtimol, u haqdir*.

The word *ehtimol* expresses uncertainty concerning the entire proposition.

Therefore, the following distinction is necessary:

syntactic dependence $\neq$ semantic scope

This distinction provides an important methodological basis for the analysis of independent elements.

3.9. Combinatorial models

The comparative analysis allows several basic combinatorial models to be identified.

Model 1: Initial independent element

Independent element + proposition

“Perhaps, he will arrive.”

Ehtimol, u keladi.

Model 2: Medial independent element

Subject + independent element + predicate

“He, perhaps, will arrive.”

U, ehtimol, keladi.

Model 3: Final independent element

Proposition + independent element

“He will arrive, perhaps.”

U keladi, ehtimol.

Model 4: Parenthetical insertion

Proposition + parenthetical element + Proposition

“The decision, in my opinion, was correct.”

Qaror, meningfikrimcha, to ‘g ‘riedi.

Model 5: Vocative + proposition

Vocative + proposition

“John, come here.”

Jon, buyergakel.

These models reveal that syntactic independence is closely associated with positional and combinatorial flexibility.

3.10. *Functional-semantic and combinatorial interaction*

The most important result of the analysis is that functional-semantic and combinatorial properties cannot be studied separately.

The position of an element may affect its pragmatic prominence. Its combination with a particular type of predicate may determine its semantic interpretation. Its prosodic separation may strengthen its status as a peripheral component. Thus:

Form → Position → Combination → Function → Meaning

The relationship is not linear but interactive. For example:

Fortunately, he survived.

The initial position emphasizes the speaker's evaluation. Compare:

He survived, fortunately.

The final position may produce a somewhat different discourse effect, presenting the evaluation as an afterthought or supplementary comment.

Uzbek demonstrates a similar relationship:

Yaxshiyamki, u tiriqqoldi.

U tiriqqoldi, yaxshiyamki.

Therefore, combinatorial syntax should be understood as the study of the potential relationships between an element and its structural, semantic, and communicative environment.

4. CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of syntactically independent elements in English and Uzbek demonstrates that syntactic independence is a relative structural property rather than complete grammatical isolation. Independent elements may remain outside the

obligatory predicative structure while contributing substantially to the semantic and communicative interpretation of the utterance.

The analysis has shown that the major functional-semantic groups include modal, evaluative, emotional, vocative, parenthetical, and discourse-organizing elements. Their common characteristic is their capacity to introduce additional meanings without becoming obligatory components of the predicative core.

The English-Uzbek comparison reveals both universal and language-specific tendencies. English demonstrates comparatively stronger positional restrictions because of its relatively fixed word order, whereas Uzbek provides greater positional flexibility. At the same time, both languages use syntactically peripheral elements to express modality, evaluation, emotional attitude, address, and pragmatic orientation.

The analysis of prepositions further demonstrates that functional-semantic equivalence does not necessarily correspond to structural equivalence. English predominantly realizes relations through prepositions, while Uzbek frequently employs case suffixes and postpositions. Consequently, the same semantic relation may be represented by different combinatorial structures in the two languages.

The research therefore proposes that syntactic independence should be examined through three interconnected dimensions:

structural autonomy + semantic relevance + communicative functionality.

The combinatorial dimension adds a fourth component:

structural autonomy + semantic relevance + communicative functionality + combinatorial mobility.

This model provides a basis for a more comprehensive description of syntactically independent elements in English and Uzbek and may contribute to the development of comparative, functional, and communicative approaches to syntax.

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