



# THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES AND THEIR FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

Elmirzayeva Maftuna Dusmurodovna  
Karshi State University, Foreign Language Faculty  
Teacher of Practical English department  
Email: [maftunaelmirzayeva7@gmail.com](mailto:maftunaelmirzayeva7@gmail.com)

To'ychiyev Azamat Farxod o'g'li  
Student of Karshi State University  
Foreign Language Faculty  
Email: [atoychiyev266@gmail.com](mailto:atoychiyev266@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Grammar is a fundamental component of linguistic theory, providing a structured system through which meaning is encoded and interpreted. The study of grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, mood, voice, number, and case has evolved from purely structural descriptions to functional and cognitive interpretations. This article aims to investigate the theoretical foundations of grammatical categories and their functional roles in modern linguistics. The study employs qualitative methods based on descriptive, comparative, and analytical approaches. The findings reveal that grammatical categories are not only formal linguistic units but also dynamic tools of communication and cognition.

**Keywords:** Theoretical grammar, grammatical categories, tense, aspect, functional grammar, cognitive linguistics, English, Uzbek.



## Introduction

Grammar has always occupied a central position in linguistic studies as it provides the rules and structures that govern language use. Traditionally, grammar was viewed as a system of forms and rules; however, modern linguistics considers grammar as a complex interaction of form, meaning, and function.

Theoretical grammar focuses on the analysis of grammatical categories, which represent essential components of linguistic structure. These categories include tense, aspect, mood, voice, number, and case. They enable speakers to express temporal relations, modality, quantity, and syntactic relationships within sentences.

Different linguistic paradigms have approached grammar from various perspectives. Structural linguistics, represented by Ferdinand de Saussure, emphasizes formal relationships within language. Generative grammar, introduced by Noam Chomsky, focuses on innate linguistic competence and universal grammar. Functional linguistics, particularly M.A.K. Halliday's approach, highlights the communicative role of grammar. Cognitive linguistics, represented by scholars such as Ronald Langacker, connects grammar with human cognition and conceptualization.

The importance of theoretical grammar is especially evident in comparative studies. English and Uzbek, for instance, differ significantly in grammatical structure: English is an analytic language, while Uzbek is agglutinative. These differences create challenges in translation and language learning, making theoretical analysis essential. This study is based on qualitative research methodology and theoretical analysis. The following methods were applied:

**Descriptive method** – to define grammatical categories;

**Comparative method** – to compare English and Uzbek grammar;

**Analytical method** – to interpret functions of grammatical categories;

**Synthesis method** – to integrate different theoretical approaches.

The research materials include works of Saussure, Chomsky, Halliday, Langacker, and other linguists.

The research process includes:

1. Identification of grammatical categories;
2. Theoretical analysis;
3. Functional interpretation;

#### 4. Comparative evaluation (English–Uzbek).

No experimental data was used, as this is a theoretical study.

### Results

**1. System of grammatical categories.** The system of grammatical categories refers to the organized set of linguistic features that express essential meanings in a language. These categories include tense, aspect, mood, voice, number, and case, and they function together as an integrated system rather than as isolated elements. Each category represents a specific type of grammatical meaning, such as time, quantity, or speaker attitude.

Grammatical categories operate at different levels of language, including morphology, syntax, and semantics. They are realized through various forms, such as affixes, auxiliary verbs, and word order. In different languages, these categories may be expressed differently; for example, English often uses auxiliary verbs and fixed word order, while Uzbek relies more on suffixes and morphological markers.

#### 2. Classification of grammatical categories

Grammatical categories can be classified as follows:

Category	English Example	Uzbek Example	Function
Tense	I went	Men bordim	Time expression
Aspect	I am reading	Men o‘qiyapman	Action process
Mood	Open the door	Eshikni oching	Speaker attitude
Voice	It was written	U yozildi	Action relation
Number	books	kitoblar	Quantity
Case	him	uni	Syntax relation

#### 3. English–Uzbek grammatical differences

The comparison reveals structural differences between the two languages.

Feature	English	Uzbek
Type	Analytic	Agglutinative
Word order	SVO	SOV
Articles	Present	Absent
Tense system	Complex	Simpler
Morphology	Limited	Rich



4. Functional role of grammar. Grammar plays a crucial role in language as it functions not only as a structural system but also as a means of communication and cognition. In modern linguistics, grammar is understood as a dynamic and multifunctional system that enables speakers to organize information, express meanings, and interact effectively in different communicative contexts.

First, grammar performs a **structural function**. It provides the rules and patterns that govern sentence formation, ensuring that linguistic units are arranged in a coherent and understandable way. Through grammatical categories such as word order, agreement, and case marking, language users can construct sentences that are grammatically correct and logically organized. Without grammar, language would lack structure, and communication would become ambiguous and ineffective.

Second, grammar serves a **communicative function**, as emphasized in functional linguistics. It allows speakers to convey intentions, attitudes, and interpersonal meanings. For instance, grammatical categories such as mood and tense help express commands, requests, possibilities, and temporal relations. The choice of grammatical forms often depends on the communicative situation, including the relationship between speakers, the level of formality, and the purpose of communication. Thus, grammar is not only about correctness but also about appropriateness in context.

Third, grammar has a **cognitive function**, as highlighted in cognitive linguistics. It reflects how humans perceive and conceptualize reality. Grammatical categories such as aspect and tense are closely related to the way speakers understand time, events, and processes. For example, the distinction between completed and ongoing actions shows how speakers mentally structure experiences. In this sense, grammar is closely linked to human thought and cognition.

Additionally, grammar plays an important role in **discourse organization**. It helps structure information within a text or conversation, guiding the listener or reader through the message. Elements such as tense consistency, reference, and cohesion contribute to the overall coherence of discourse.

From a comparative perspective, the functional role of grammar can be observed in different languages, including English and Uzbek. Although these languages differ typologically English being analytic and Uzbek agglutinative they perform

similar communicative and cognitive functions through different grammatical means. For example, while English uses auxiliary verbs to express tense and aspect, Uzbek relies on suffixes. Despite these structural differences, both languages effectively convey meaning and facilitate communication.

### 5. English–Uzbek Examples and Their Grammatical Analysis

A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek grammatical categories reveals significant structural and functional differences, particularly in the expression of tense, aspect, mood, voice, and word order. These differences are largely обусловлен typological distinctions between English as an analytic language and Uzbek as an agglutinative language. Each category demonstrates unique rules and transformation patterns in translation and usage.

#### Tense

In English, tense is often expressed through auxiliary verbs and verb forms, including complex structures such as the present perfect. For example, the sentence “*She has lived here for 5 years*” represents the present perfect tense, which combines the auxiliary verb *has* with the past participle *lived*. This tense is used to describe an action that started in the past and continues into the present.

In Uzbek, however, there is no direct grammatical equivalent of the present perfect tense. Instead, this meaning is conveyed through a combination of present tense and duration markers. The Uzbek translation “*U bu yerda 5 yildan beri yashaydi*” uses the present tense verb *yashaydi* along with the temporal expression *5 yildan beri*, which indicates continuity from the past up to the present.

👉 **Rule:** English present perfect → Uzbek present tense + duration expression (-*dan beri*)

#### Aspect

Aspect in English reflects the internal structure of an action, particularly whether it is ongoing or completed. The present continuous tense, as seen in “*He is writing*”, is formed using the auxiliary verb *is* and the present participle *writing*. It emphasizes that the action is in progress at the moment of speaking.

In Uzbek, aspect is expressed morphologically through verb suffixes. The equivalent sentence “*U yozayapti*” uses the suffix *-yapti*, which indicates an ongoing action.

👉 **Rule:** English continuous aspect (be + V-ing) → Uzbek verb + *-yapti* / *-moqda*

### Mood

Mood expresses the speaker’s attitude toward the action, such as possibility, necessity, or condition. In English, the subjunctive mood is used in hypothetical or unreal situations. For example, “*If I were you...*” uses the past subjunctive form *were* to indicate an unreal condition.

In Uzbek, such meanings are conveyed through conditional constructions. The equivalent “*Agar men siz bo‘lsam...*” uses the conditional form *bo‘lsam*, formed by adding the suffix *-sa*.

👉 **Rule:** English subjunctive mood → Uzbek conditional form (*-sa*)

### Voice

Voice shows the relationship between the action and its participants. In English, the passive voice is formed using the auxiliary verb *be* and the past participle. For example, “*The work was done*” emphasizes the result of the action rather than the doer.

In Uzbek, passive constructions are formed morphologically using suffixes such as *-il* or *-in*. The equivalent “*Ish bajarildi*” uses the passive suffix *-il*, attached to the verb root.

👉 **Rule:** English passive (be + V3) → Uzbek verb + passive suffix (*-il* / *-in*)

### Word Order

Word order is another key area of difference between English and Uzbek. English typically follows a Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) structure. For example, “*I bought a book*” follows this pattern.

In contrast, Uzbek follows a Subject–Object–Verb (SOV) structure. The equivalent sentence “*Men kitob sotib oldim*” places the object before the verb, with the verb appearing at the end of the sentence.

👉 **Rule:** English (SVO) → Uzbek (SOV)



## General Observation

Overall, the analysis shows that while grammatical meanings such as tense, aspect, mood, and voice are universal, their expression varies significantly between languages. English tends to rely on auxiliary verbs and fixed word order, whereas Uzbek uses rich morphological markers and flexible structures.

These differences are particularly important in translation studies, as they require not literal but **functional equivalence**, ensuring that meaning is preserved even when form changes.

The analysis confirms that grammatical categories are essential components of linguistic theory. Structural linguistics emphasizes form, generative grammar focuses on competence, functional grammar highlights communication, and cognitive linguistics connects grammar with human thought.

The comparison between English and Uzbek demonstrates that grammatical categories are language-specific but functionally universal. While English relies more on syntax and auxiliary verbs, Uzbek uses suffixation and morphological markers.

Another important finding is that grammar is dynamic. It evolves over time and adapts to communicative needs. Therefore, grammar should be studied not only as a static system but also as a functional and cognitive phenomenon.

## Conclusion

This study has examined the theoretical and functional aspects of grammatical categories in modern linguistics, emphasizing their central role in the organization and interpretation of language. The analysis has demonstrated that grammatical categories constitute the foundation of linguistic structure, as they enable speakers to encode meaning systematically and express relationships between linguistic units. At the same time, these categories perform important communicative and cognitive functions, allowing speakers not only to convey information but also to conceptualize reality and structure their thoughts.

The study has also shown that different linguistic theories—such as structuralism, generative grammar, functional linguistics, and cognitive linguistics offer complementary perspectives on the nature of grammatical categories. While structural approaches focus on formal relations, functional and cognitive frameworks highlight meaning, usage, and conceptualization. Together, these



perspectives contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of grammar as a dynamic and multifaceted system.

Furthermore, the comparison between English and Uzbek has revealed significant typological differences in grammatical structure. English, as an analytic language, relies heavily on word order and auxiliary elements, whereas Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, employs rich morphological markers. Despite these differences, both languages demonstrate functional similarities in expressing core grammatical meanings such as tense, aspect, mood, and voice.

Finally, the integration of diagrams, tables, and bilingual examples in this study has enhanced the clarity and depth of theoretical analysis, making complex grammatical concepts more accessible and comparable. Future research may focus on more detailed comparative investigations of grammatical systems and explore translation-related challenges arising from typological differences between languages.

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