

# SEMANTIC AND FUNCTIONAL PECULIARITIES OF SPEAKING VERBS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

Jo'raqulova Komila Mansur qizi

1-st Course Master's Student University of Economics and Pedagogy

Karshi City, Republic of Uzbekistan

## Abstract

This article looks into the semantic and functional quirks of verb usage in Uzbek and English languages with the goal of identifying both language-specific and universal traits. Speaking verbs are examined from lexical-semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic viewpoints. They express the act of verbal communication. Speaking verb classification, semantic subtleties, and syntactic behavior in various communicative circumstances are the main topics of the study. Comparative investigation demonstrates how linguistic and cultural factors impact how speech acts are conceptualized and categorized in Uzbek and English. Verb collocations, pragmatic indicators, and direct and indirect speech constructs that convey speaker purpose and interpersonal interactions are all given particular consideration. The results advance the field of contrastive linguistics and offer insightful information for intercultural communication, language instruction, and translation studies.

**Keywords:** Speaking verbs, semantics, pragmatics, syntax, contrastive linguistics, speech acts, verb classification, cultural factors, verbal communication, direct and indirect speech, verb collocations, pragmatic markers, language teaching, translation studies, intercultural communication.

## Introduction

Speech is one of the most fundamental and powerful means of human communication. It enables individuals to express thoughts, emotions, intentions, and desires in real time, fostering interpersonal relationships and social cohesion. Unlike other forms of communication such as writing, gesture, or facial expression, speech is immediate, dynamic, and interactive, allowing for instant

feedback and adjustment in discourse. From a linguistic perspective, speech is the primary medium through which language is transmitted. It is acquired naturally in early childhood, serving as the foundation for cognitive and linguistic development. Through speech, abstract concepts are verbalized, knowledge is transferred, and cultural values are preserved across generations. The spoken word is not merely a vehicle of information—it also carries affective and social meanings through intonation, stress, rhythm, and voice quality. In socio-cultural contexts, speech plays a crucial role in shaping identity and social roles.

The way people speak—choice of words, tone, accent, and fluency—often reflects their cultural background, education, and social status. Furthermore, speech acts such as greeting, requesting, apologizing, and promising are governed by social norms and etiquette, which differ across languages and cultures. In essence, speech is more than a linguistic function; it is a core component of human interaction that enables cooperation, learning, negotiation, and community building. Its centrality to everyday life underscores the need to study not only what people say, but how and why they say it—highlighting the importance of examining speaking verbs and their

**The Role of Speaking Verbs in Communication.** Speaking verbs—also known as *verba dicendi*—play a vital role in human interaction, as they explicitly describe acts of speech and communication. These verbs do not merely convey that speech has occurred; they provide nuanced information about how, why, and under what conditions something was said. Speaking verbs function on lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic levels, enriching both spoken and written language. Speaking verbs are central to representing verbal communication. The most common and general verbs—like *say*, *tell*, and *speak* in English, or *aytmoq*, *gapirmoq*, *so‘zlamog* in Uzbek—express the basic act of producing language.

Examples: English: She said she was tired. Uzbek: U charchaganini aytdi. (She said she was tired.) These verbs establish the basic who-said-what structure necessary for reporting speech.

Many speaking verbs go beyond the neutral act of "saying" something and provide information about the manner, tone, or intent behind the speech. This includes verbs such as: English: *murmur*, *whisper*, *yell*, *stutter*, *grumble*, *insist*, *confess*. Uzbek: *pichirlamoq* (to whisper), *qichqirmoq* (to shout), *dodlamoq* (to cry out), *tushuntirmoq* (to explain), *bo‘lishmoq* (to share)

These verbs allow the speaker or narrator to encode emotional, psychological, or social attitudes into the verb choice. Examples: English: He whispered a secret to her. Uzbek: U unga sirni pichirladi. (He whispered a secret to her.) English: She confessed her mistake. Uzbek: U xatosini tan oldi. (She admitted/confessed her mistake.)

Speaking verbs often serve as reporting verbs in direct and indirect speech, playing a grammatical role in linking main and subordinate clauses.

Direct speech: English: He said, "I'm coming."

Uzbek: U: "Kelayapman", - dedi.

Indirect speech: English: He said that he was coming.

Uzbek: U kelayotganini aytdi.

In both languages, speaking verbs are essential for narrative cohesion and help construct reported dialogue in stories, journalism, academic writing, and conversation.

Speaking verbs also carry pragmatic meaning—they reflect the intended speech act (e.g., command, request, suggestion, apology, etc.).

Examples: English: He requested a meeting. (indicates a polite action)

She warned him about the danger. (warns of consequence)

Uzbek: U uchrashuvni so'radi. (He requested a meeting.)

U uni xavf haqida ogohlantirdi. (She warned him about the danger.)

This shows how speaking verbs are often tightly bound to social context and politeness strategies. In both English and Uzbek, speaking verbs reflect cultural norms regarding communication. For example: English emphasizes clarity, individual expression, and politeness strategies (e.g., Could you please tell me...?).

Uzbek emphasizes respect, modesty, and age/status distinctions, which are reflected in verb choice and formality (e.g., Iltimos, aytib bering... – "Please, tell me" with politeness). Additionally, compound verbs and auxiliary constructions in Uzbek allow for more nuanced expression:

Aytib yubormoq – "to say abruptly/suddenly"

Gapirib qo'ymoq – "to say accidentally"

Speaking verbs (*verba dicendi*) form a crucial lexical-semantic category in both English and Uzbek. While their core function is to denote acts of verbal communication, these verbs carry a wide array of semantic nuances that reflect the speaker's emotion, intention, manner of speaking, and social context. This

section compares and contrasts the semantic diversity of speaking verbs in both languages.

These idioms show how verbs are embedded within broader linguistic and cultural patterns. The semantic field of speaking verbs in English and Uzbek reveals a high degree of nuance, shaped by lexical availability, cultural norms, and expressive needs. While both languages share core meanings, English tends to lexicalize manner (e.g., grumble, whisper, declare), whereas Uzbek often uses auxiliary constructions, particles, and metaphorical extensions to enrich the verb's meaning. This contrast highlights different strategies of semantic expression, reflecting the cognitive and cultural frameworks of each language community.

Speaking verbs are essential elements of both English and Uzbek languages, serving not only to denote acts of verbal communication but also to reflect speakers' intentions, emotions, and social relationships. Despite their shared communicative functions, these verbs exhibit significant functional differences due to the structural and cultural peculiarities of each language.

In both English and Uzbek, speaking verbs perform the core function of reporting or initiating speech. Verbs like say, tell, ask, and speak in English correspond to aytmoq, so'ramoq, gapirmoq, and suhbatlashmoq in Uzbek. These verbs are used in both direct and indirect speech to introduce what someone has said. For instance, English uses structures like "He said that he was tired," while Uzbek would say "U charchaganini aytdi," which carries the same functional meaning. This reflects a strong functional similarity in how both languages introduce reported speech, even though the syntactic strategies differ.

A major functional difference lies in the grammatical nature of the two languages. English is primarily an analytic language with a fixed word order and heavy reliance on auxiliary verbs, while Uzbek is agglutinative, forming meaning through extensive suffixation. For instance, to express causation (e.g., "make someone speak"), English requires a helper verb, whereas Uzbek incorporates causativity directly into the verb form (gapirtirmoq – "to cause to speak"). Similarly, passivity is constructed in English using the auxiliary "to be" plus the past participle (e.g., was told), while Uzbek uses passive suffixes like -il, -in (aytildi – "was said").

Politeness and respect present another notable difference. English generally expresses politeness through modal verbs (could you, would you) and polite phrases, whereas Uzbek incorporates social hierarchy and respect directly into verbal forms. For example, the use of *siz* instead of *sen* and corresponding respectful verb forms (*gapiring* instead of *gapir*) demonstrates how functional meaning is embedded in the verb itself in Uzbek. This allows Uzbek speakers to convey not only the act of speaking but also the social status and relationship between the interlocutors.

In terms of semantic richness, English speaking verbs are more numerous and lexically diverse, often specifying how something is said (e.g., murmur, shout, stutter, whisper). Uzbek, by contrast, relies more on context, adverbials, or compound verbs to express similar nuances (e.g., *qichqirib aytmoq* – “to say by shouting,” *pichirlab gapirmoq* – “to speak in a whisper”). This shows a functional parallel in expressive capacity, though each language uses different grammatical and lexical tools to achieve it.

When it comes to pragmatic functions, both English and Uzbek use speaking verbs to serve speech act purposes such as requesting, ordering, promising, and questioning. However, Uzbek’s cultural context places a heavier emphasis on social etiquette and humility, often leading to more formal or indirect expression through carefully chosen verbs or honorific constructions. To summarize, while English and Uzbek speaking verbs fulfill broadly similar communicative and syntactic roles, their functional execution diverges due to typological, morphological, and cultural distinctions. English achieves nuance primarily through vocabulary and auxiliary structures, while Uzbek encodes meaning more richly within verb morphology and social-pragmatic norms. Both languages reflect their unique linguistic worldviews through the functions their speaking verbs perform.

Speaking verbs (also known as communicative or speech act verbs) are verbs that describe the act of speaking or verbal communication. They play a critical role in both languages by allowing speakers to convey thoughts, ask questions, issue commands, or express emotions. Examples include:

English: say, tell, speak, ask, shout, whisper, murmur

Uzbek: *aytmoq*, *gapirmoq*, *so‘ramoq*, *baqirmoq*, *pichirlab aytmoq*

Although they perform similar communicative functions in both English and Uzbek, their morphological structure, syntactic behavior, and pragmatic usage differ significantly due to the typological nature of the two languages.

### Structural and Morphological Differences

#### Verb Formation

English is an analytic language. It conveys grammatical relationships using auxiliary verbs, prepositions, and word order. Speaking verbs are inflected only for tense (say → said), aspect (is saying, has said), or subject agreement (says).

Uzbek, being agglutinative, conveys meaning through suffixation. Verbs can carry complex grammatical information including tense, mood, voice, person, aspect, and respect markers — all in one word.

Example: He said that he would come.

Uzbek: U kelishini aytdi. (lit. "He said his coming.")

#### Functional and Syntactic Usage

##### Direct and Indirect Speech

Both languages use speaking verbs to introduce direct and indirect speech. However, the structures differ: English uses conjunctions (that, if, whether) and backshifting in tense.

Uzbek often omits conjunctions and uses participial or infinitive constructions.

Example: He said, "I am tired." English (indirect): He said that he was tired.

Uzbek: U charchaganini aytdi. ("He said [his being tired].")

##### Causative Forms

English uses modal or causative constructions (make, let) for causation. Uzbek uses causative suffixes added to the verb root.

Example: He made the child speak. English: make + speak

Uzbek: bola gapirdi (child spoke) → bola gapirtirildi (child was made to speak)

#### Semantic Nuances and Lexical Diversity

English has a rich lexical inventory of speaking verbs that express not only the act of speech but also tone, volume, intent, and psychological state.

Examples: whisper (quiet, secretive) shout (loud, emotional)

mutter, stutter, snap, sob, declare

Uzbek has fewer basic verbs, but expresses subtle differences by using:

Adverbs: baland ovozda aytdi (said loudly)

Verb combinations: pichirlab gapirmoq (to speak in a whisper)

Onomatopoeic forms: chingirlab baqirmoq (to scream piercingly)

Thus, both languages express functional semantic richness, but English does it through lexical variation, while Uzbek does it through adverbial and morphological modification.

### Politeness and Social Norms

One of the most important functional differences between the two languages lies in politeness and social hierarchy: English is relatively neutral and uses polite expressions (please, would you mind) rather than verb morphology.

Uzbek has built-in politeness expressed through:

Pronouns (sen – informal, siz – formal/respectful)

Verb suffixes indicating honorifics or humility

Verb choice changes according to age, status, and context

Example: Speak, please! Informal Uzbek: Gapir!

Formal Uzbek: Gapiring!

The social function of speaking verbs in Uzbek includes conveying respect, familiarity, or social distance, making them functionally more socially sensitive than their English counterparts.

### Category English Verbs Uzbek Verbs

Asserting/Informing say, tell, state aytmoq, bildirmoq

Questioning ask, inquire so‘ramoq, surishtirmoq

Requesting request, beg iltimos qilmoq, so‘rab ko‘rmoq

Commanding order, command buyurmoq, topshirmoq

Advising/Warning advise, warn maslahat bermoq, ogohlantirmoq

Conversing talk, chat, speak gaplashmoq, suhbatlashmoq

Both languages support a wide functional range, though again Uzbek more often combines verbs with contextually loaded adverbs or constructions.

### Idiomatic and Figurative Use

In both languages, speaking verbs appear in idioms and phraseological units, extending their function to metaphorical meanings.

English: talk someone into something, speak volumes, tell the truth, bite one’s tongue

Uzbek: gap ko‘p – “too much talk,” so‘zga kirish – “to obey,” og‘zidan gul to‘kiladi – “he speaks eloquently”

These idiomatic uses reflect cultural norms, communicative expectations, and social behavior, making them essential in functional language use.

Speaking verbs in English and Uzbek share essential communicative functions such as informing, questioning, requesting, and commanding. However, the functional realization of these verbs differs substantially:

English emphasizes syntactic construction, modal expression, and vocabulary.

Uzbek relies more heavily on morphological richness, honorific expression, and cultural pragmatics. These functional differences reflect not only linguistic structure but also deeper cultural values, such as individualism vs. collectivism, directness vs. indirectness, and egalitarianism vs. hierarchy. Thus, while speaking verbs perform universal communicative functions in both English and Uzbek, they do so through distinct linguistic strategies shaped by each language's grammar, morphology, and culture.

**Functional Differences and Similarities of Speaking Verbs in English and Uzbek**  
Speaking verbs are crucial in both English and Uzbek, as they serve not only to denote verbal communication but also to express attitudes, intentions, and social relationships. Though these verbs fulfill similar communicative functions in both languages, the way they are grammatically and pragmatically realized differs significantly due to the structural and cultural peculiarities of each language.

In terms of their core communicative functions, speaking verbs in both English and Uzbek are used to report, request, command, and express thoughts or emotions. For example, English verbs such as say, tell, ask, and speak correspond to Uzbek equivalents like *aytmoq*, *soʻramoq*, *gapirmoq*, and *suhbatlashmoq*. These are used to introduce both direct and indirect speech, serving a narrative function in both languages. An English sentence like “He said that he was tired” has a direct equivalent in Uzbek: “U charchaganini aytdi.” This demonstrates a clear functional similarity in how both languages introduce reported speech, although the syntactic constructions differ slightly.

Structurally, the two languages diverge due to their typological classifications. English is an analytic language, which means that it relies on word order and auxiliary verbs to express grammatical relationships. Speaking verbs in English are inflected minimally, typically only for tense or subject-verb agreement. In contrast, Uzbek is an agglutinative language that builds words by adding suffixes to a root. A single Uzbek speaking verb can include markers for person, tense, aspect, mood, voice, and politeness. For example, while English expresses causation with additional verbs—such as “He made her speak”—Uzbek uses a causative suffix, producing a form like *gapirtirdi*, which conveys the same idea

in a single word. Likewise, English expresses passivity through auxiliary constructions, such as “was told,” whereas Uzbek uses passive suffixes, as in *aytildi*.

One of the most noticeable functional differences involves the expression of politeness and social hierarchy. In English, politeness is expressed primarily through modal verbs (could, would), adverbs (please, kindly), or tone. There are no grammatical forms that directly express respect. In contrast, Uzbek embeds respect into the very structure of the verb. The use of respectful pronouns (*siz* vs. *sen*) and corresponding verb endings communicates the speaker’s attitude toward the listener’s social status. For example, the imperative *gapir* means “speak” in an informal way, while *gapiring* conveys the same command in a polite or formal tone. Thus, Uzbek speaking verbs are more socially sensitive and serve not only linguistic but also cultural functions.

Another key difference lies in how each language handles semantic richness and nuance. English has a wide range of speaking verbs, each describing a specific way of speaking, such as *murmur*, *whisper*, *shout*, *yell*, *stutter*, *exclaim*, and so on. These verbs not only describe that someone spoke, but also how it was done and often what emotional state the speaker was in. Uzbek, on the other hand, typically uses a smaller set of root speaking verbs, such as *aytmoq* and *gapirmoq*, and adds adverbs or forms compound expressions to convey nuance. For instance, *pichirlab aytmoq* means “to whisper” (literally, “to say in a whisper”) and *baqirib gapirmoq* means “to shout” (literally, “to speak loudly”).

Despite these structural differences, both languages use speaking verbs in similar pragmatic contexts. They both support a wide range of speech acts, such as asserting, requesting, advising, warning, and questioning. English verbs like *say*, *tell*, *ask*, *request*, *advise*, *warn*, and *command* have their equivalents in Uzbek: *aytmoq*, *so‘ramoq*, *iltimos qilmoq*, *maslahat bermoq*, *ogohlantirmoq*, and *buyurmoq*.

Each of these verbs functions similarly across the languages in terms of communicative intent, though their morphological constructions and degrees of politeness may vary.

In addition to literal speech, both English and Uzbek use speaking verbs in figurative and idiomatic expressions, expanding their functional range. For example, English includes idioms like “bite your tongue” (meaning to refrain from speaking), “speak volumes” (to reveal a lot), and “talk someone into

something” (to persuade). Uzbek also has idiomatic phrases involving speech, such as og‘zidan gul to‘kiladi (“flowers fall from his mouth” – he speaks beautifully) and so‘zga kirish (“to enter the word” – to obey or follow advice). These idioms illustrate how cultural metaphors influence the way speaking verbs are used beyond their literal meanings.

In conclusion, speaking verbs in English and Uzbek play similarly important roles in expressing speech and communication. Functionally, they share many core uses, such as reporting speech and performing speech acts. However, they differ in how these functions are realized. English uses analytic structures and a large, nuanced vocabulary of speaking verbs. Uzbek, in contrast, uses agglutinative morphology and socially encoded verb forms to achieve similar effects. The result is a fascinating cross-linguistic contrast where the same communicative goals are fulfilled through distinct structural and cultural paths.

## REFERENCES:

1. Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. Longman.
3. Crystal, D. (2003). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Yuldashev, A. (2006). *O‘zbek tilining nazariy asoslari*. Toshkent: O‘zbekiston Fanlar Akademiyasi.
5. Karimov, R. M. (2015). *O‘zbek tilida nutq fe’llari va ularning semantik-tarixiy xususiyatlari*. – PhD Dissertation, National University of Uzbekistan.
6. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Sadock, J. M. (1974). *Toward a Linguistic Theory of Speech Acts*. Academic Press.
8. Khodjayev, M. (2004). *O‘zbek tilining nutq madaniyati*. Tashkent: O‘qituvchi.
9. Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. Penguin Books.
10. Azimova, N. (2012). *The Uzbek Language and Culture: A Concise Guide for Students*. Georgetown University Press.
11. Levin, B. (1993). *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A Preliminary Investigation*. University of Chicago Press.

12. Fillmore, C. J. (1971). Types of Lexical Information. In Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader. Cambridge University Press.
13. Vendler, Z. (1967). Linguistics in Philosophy. Cornell University Press.
14. Saeed, J. I. (2016). Semantics (4th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
15. Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). An Introduction to Functional Grammar (2nd ed.). Edward Arnold.