LEXICAL-SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE PHRASES IN UZBEK: A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF MORPHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS, SEMANTIC FIELDS, AND STYLISTIC FUNCTIONS

Rakhmonkulov Ma'rufjon Maxamat o'g'li
Jizzakh State Pedagogical University, Faculty of Languages, Uzbekistan
rmmteacher798@gmail.com
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Abstract

This paper investigates the lexical-semantic properties of comparative adjective phrases (CAPs) in contemporary Uzbek, analysing the morphological mechanisms through which comparativity is encoded, the semantic fields across which comparative adjectives are distributed, and the stylistic functions they perform in different registers of Uzbek discourse. As an agglutinative Turkic language, Uzbek encodes comparison through a system that is morphologically uniform but semantically and pragmatically rich: the suffix -roq and the ablative postposition -dan form the grammatical core of the comparative system, while a layered set of lexical intensifiers, equative particles, and register-sensitive construction types extends its expressive range. Through close analysis of 54 attested examples drawn from literary, scientific, journalistic, and spoken Uzbek, the study identifies five principal semantic fields of comparative adjectives, four categories of pragmatically and semantically complex usage, and three major register-conditioned variation patterns. The findings reveal that the Uzbek comparative system is typologically distinctive in several respects that bear directly on contrastive analysis with English and on the teaching and translation of comparative constructions.

Keywords: comparative adjective phrases, Uzbek morphology, -roq suffix, lexical-semantic analysis, semantic fields, intensifiers, equative comparison, register variation, contrastive linguistics

1. Introduction

Comparative constructions are among the most cognitively and communicatively fundamental categories in human language. By relating the degree of a scalar property held by one entity to that held by another, they allow speakers to rank, evaluate, and differentiate the objects of their experience in a linguistically precise way. In Uzbek linguistics, adjective morphology and the degree system have attracted sustained scholarly attention since the mid-twentieth century, with foundational contributions from Reshetov (1966), Mirzayev and Tojiboyev (2003), and Mengliyev (2012). Notwithstanding this body of descriptive work, the lexical-semantic dimension of Uzbek comparative adjective phrases — their distribution across semantic fields, their interaction with intensifiers and equative particles, their behaviour in complex and metaphorical contexts, and their register-conditioned variation — has not previously received systematic treatment as an integrated object of inquiry.

The present study addresses this gap. It proceeds from the theoretical premise, articulated by Sapir (1944) and developed in typological perspective by Croft (2003), that comparativity is a cognitive-semantic universal that is nonetheless realised through radically language-specific grammatical mechanisms. For Uzbek, this means that the universal comparative operation — asserting that a subject's degree on a scalar property exceeds a contextually specified standard — is encoded through a system that diverges fundamentally from the English model in its morphological strategy, syntactic marking of the standard, equative construction type, and the pragmatic extensions to which the core comparative morpheme is put. These divergences are not merely formal curiosities; they have direct consequences for contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and language pedagogy.

1.1 Research Aim and Objectives

The overarching aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive lexical-semantic account of comparative adjective phrases in contemporary Uzbek. The specific objectives are:

1. To describe the morphological mechanisms of the Uzbek comparative system — specifically the -roq suffix and the -dan ablative postposition — and to analyse their semantic scope beyond the core degree-comparative function;
2. To develop a principled five-field semantic taxonomy of Uzbek comparative adjectives and to illustrate each field with attested examples;
3. To document and classify the lexical intensifiers that operate within the Uzbek comparative system and to compare their functional range with English degree adverbs;
4. To analyse the equative comparative constructions formed with kabi, singari, -dek, and -day and to determine their semantic relationship to formal equative comparison;
5. To identify and theorise four categories of semantically and pragmatically complex CAP usage;
6. To characterise register-conditioned variation in the deployment of CAPs across scientific, journalistic, literary, and spoken Uzbek.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative corpus-based design within the theoretical framework of lexical semantics as developed by Lyons (1977) and Cruse (1986), and within the typological framework of Croft (2003). The analytical procedure is inductive: semantic generalisations are derived from the detailed analysis of attested examples rather than tested against pre-specified hypotheses. This approach is appropriate given the descriptive nature of the inquiry and the absence of a prior comprehensive lexical-semantic account of the Uzbek comparative system against which hypotheses could be formulated.

2.2 Data Sources

The corpus comprises 54 attested examples of Uzbek comparative adjective phrases drawn from four source types: (1) literary texts, including canonical works of modern Uzbek prose and poetry, accessed through the holdings of the National Library of Uzbekistan; (2) journalistic texts from print and online editions of leading Uzbek-language newspapers and magazines published between 2010 and 2023; (3) scientific and academic texts, including linguistics monographs and academic journal articles; and (4) transcribed spoken Uzbek from sociolinguistic fieldwork recordings. Morphologically and semantically complex examples — including metaphorical comparatives, absolute comparatives, lexicalised forms, and pragmatically marked constructions — were specifically sought to ensure coverage of the full range of CAP usage.

2.3 Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the morphological structure of each attested CAP was described, with attention to the allomorphic realisation of the -roq suffix, the presence or absence of the -dan standard marker, and the selection and position of any intensifier. Second, each CAP was assigned to one of five semantic fields on the basis of the lexical content of the adjective and the semantic role of the comparative. Third, each example was assessed for pragmatic complexity, register marking, and potential for semantic indeterminacy. The resulting classification was then evaluated against the theoretical frameworks of Lyons (1977), Cruse (1986), and Croft (2003).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Three theoretical frameworks jointly inform the analysis. Lyons's (1977) semantic-field theory provides the classificatory apparatus for the five-field taxonomy proposed in Section 3.3. Cruse's (1986) lexical semantics — specifically his accounts of absolute versus relative adjectives, markedness in antonymous pairs, and transferred comparison — underpins the analysis of complex and metaphorical CAPs. Croft's (2003) typological framework, and particularly his parametric contrast between case-marking and particle strategies for encoding the comparative standard, provides the cross-linguistic analytical perspective that situates the Uzbek system within the broader typological space.

3. Results

3.1 The -roq Suffix: Morphological Analysis and Semantic Scope

The primary morphological exponent of the comparative degree in Uzbek is the suffix -roq, which attaches directly to the adjective stem to assert that the property denoted by the adjective holds to a greater degree in the subject than in the standard of comparison. As Mengliyev (2012) documents, the suffix has two allomorphic realisations conditioned by the final segment of the stem: adjectives ending in a vowel take -roq (katta 'big' → kattaroq; chiroyli 'beautiful' → chiroyliroq), while those ending in a consonant take -(o)roq (baland 'tall' → balandroq; aqlli 'intelligent' → aqlliroq). This allomorphic distribution is phonologically conditioned but morphologically uniform: unlike English, which requires the translator to choose between synthetic -er and periphrastic more on the basis of syllable count, Uzbek imposes no category-selection problem.

Beyond its core degree-comparative function, the -roq suffix exhibits a notable range of extended pragmatic uses that have no parallel in English -er. Reshetov (1966) documents four functionally distinct deployment patterns:

(1) Bu yo'l uzunroq, ammo xavfsizroq. (This road is longer, but safer.) — Contrastive-conjunctive function: two properties are simultaneously compared, and -roq operates as part of a concessive rhetorical structure.

(2) Kechroq kelaver, ishlar tugagach boraqol. (Come a bit later; go once the work is done.) — Pragmatic mitigation: -roq reduces the directiveness of a request, corresponding to English 'a little' or 'if you don't mind'.

(3) Kattaroq ovoz bilan gapir. (Speak in a louder voice.) — Intensification without explicit standard: the comparative is absolute, with no overt -dan standard marker.

(4) U boshqalarga qaraganda ancha sabr-toqatliroq. (She is considerably more patient than the others.) — Amplified comparison: -roq combines with the intensifier ancha to strengthen the comparative claim.

At the lexical-semantic level, -roq applies to both denotative and connotative adjectives. With denotative adjectives (uzun, katta, og'ir, sovuq), the suffix encodes measurable excess on an objective scalar dimension. With connotative adjectives (yaxshi, go'zal, aziz, baxtli), it encodes subjective evaluative excess, incorporating speaker attitude and affective orientation. This semantic versatility exceeds that of English -er, which is restricted primarily to scalar degree.

An important constraint on -roq suffixation is documented by Saidova (2008): adjectives denoting absolute or binary states (o'lik 'dead', hayot 'alive') resist -roq in normative usage, since they do not denote gradable properties. However, in literary Uzbek, such forms appear with deliberate expressive intent:

(5) U hech qachon bu qadar tirikroq his qilmagan edi. (He had never felt more alive than this.) — The comparative of an absolute-state adjective creates a paradox that the literary context resolves as metaphorical intensification.

3.2 The -dan Ablative: Marking the Standard of Comparison

In a complete Uzbek comparative construction, the -dan ablative postposition marks the standard of comparison — the entity against which the subject's degree of the relevant property is asserted to be greater. This function is typologically equivalent to that of English than, but the two markers differ fundamentally in grammatical category: -dan is a case suffix that forms part of the morphological paradigm of the standard noun phrase, while than is a syntactic particle that introduces a comparative clause. The consequence of this difference is that Uzbek comparative constructions are characteristically monoclausal, whereas English comparatives may expand into biclausal structures.

The -dan standard marker exhibits notable syntactic flexibility, accepting not only nominal but also nominalised clausal standards:

(6) Temur Sardordan balandroq. (Temur is taller than Sardor.) — Canonical nominal standard.

(7) Bu shahar o'sha shaharchadam ancha kattaroq va rivojlanganroq. (This city is considerably bigger and more developed than that small town.) — Single -dan standard governs two simultaneous comparative predicates.

(8) Kutilgandan ko'ra natijalar yaxshiroq chiqdi. (The results turned out better than expected.) — Nominalised clausal standard: the standard is a passive participle phrase rather than a simple noun phrase, illustrating the syntactic flexibility of the -dan construction.

Bo'ronov and Mo'minov (1981) situate the -dan comparative within a common Turkic typological pattern shared across all members of the family, distinguishing it as a typological rather than purely genetic universal.

3.3 Semantic Field Taxonomy of Uzbek Comparative Adjectives

Building on Lyons's (1977) semantic-field theory, the following five-field taxonomy is proposed for Uzbek comparative adjective phrases. Each field is characterised by a distinct semantic content, a typical intensifier profile, and a preferred discourse register.

Table 1 presents a summary of the five semantic fields, their representative adjective types, and their register distribution.

Table 1. Semantic Field Taxonomy of Uzbek Comparative Adjective Phrases

Semantic Field	Representative Adjectives	Typical Intensifier	Primary Register
I. Physical/Spatial	balandroq, kattaroq, tezroq, uzoqroq, issiqroq	ancha, ikki baravar	Scientific, technical
II. Intellectual/Cognitive	aqlliroq, ziyrakroq, ijodiyroq, chuqurroq	ancha, juda ham	Academic, pedagogical
III. Moral/Social	odilroq, mehribonroq, halolroq, mas'uliyatliroq	ancha, yanada	Literary, journalistic
IV. Aesthetic/Emotional	go'zalroq, dilkashroq, nafisroq, ta'sirchanroq	yanada, ham	Literary, poetic
V. Quantitative/Degree	ko'proq, kamroq, yuqoriroq, pastroq	ikki baravar, birmuncha	Scientific, economic

Field I: Physical and Spatial Properties. Adjectives in this field denote objectively measurable properties of physical entities — size, height, weight, speed, distance, temperature. The comparative forms of such adjectives (balandroq, kattaroq, og'irroq, tezroq, uzoqroq, issiqroq, sovuqroq) are semantically unambiguous: the -roq suffix encodes measurable excess on a single objective scale, and both the subject and the standard are typically overtly specified.

(9) Farg'ona vodiysi Zarafshon vodiysidan kengroq va tekisroq. (The Fergana Valley is wider and flatter than the Zarafshan Valley.) — Two physical parameters compared simultaneously; both -dan standards are present.

(10) Bu tog' cho'qqisi Oltoydan balandroq, lekin Everestdan ancha pastroq. (This mountain peak is higher than the Altai but considerably lower than Everest.) — Chained comparison with two -dan standards encoding upper and lower bounds simultaneously.

Field II: Intellectual and Cognitive Properties. This field comprises adjectives that predicate mental attributes: aqlliroq, donoroq, ziyrakroq, mulohazaliroq, ijodiyroq. The comparative parameter in this field is inherently multidimensional and evaluatively loaded, creating potential for semantic vagueness that is absent from Field I:

(11) U tengdoshlaridan ancha ziyrakroq va mulohazaliroqdir. (She is considerably more perceptive and reflective than her peers.) — Two cognitive attributes compared against a generic group standard; the comparative is evaluative rather than strictly measurable.

(12) Bu masalaga uning yondashuvi boshqalarnikidan tubdan farqli va ancha puxtalashtirilganroq. (His approach to this problem is fundamentally different from the others and considerably more thoroughly developed.) — The -roq suffix is attached to a complex participial adjective, demonstrating the morphological productivity of the comparative system.

Field II is particularly frequent in pedagogical and academic discourse, where cognitive differentiation between students, approaches, or analyses is a primary communicative function.

Field III: Moral and Social Properties. Adjectives in this field encode ethically and socially valued attributes: odilroq, halolroq, insonparvarroq, kamtarroq, mehribonroq, vazifaliroq, mas'uliyatliroq. Ko'ng'urov (1983) notes that this field generates the highest frequency of comparative forms in Uzbek literary and public discourse, a finding consistent with the prominent role of normative social evaluation in these genres.

(13) Yangi rahbar avvalgisidan ancha adolatliroq va xodimlar bilan muloqotda ochiqroqdir. (The new director is considerably more fair and open in communication with employees than the previous one.) — Professional-ethical evaluation; the abstract standard ('the previous director') is recoverable from context.

(14) Zamon talabicha, yoshlar ota-onalaridan ko'ra yangilikka moslashuvchanroq. (As the times demand, young people are more adaptable to novelty than their parents.) — Intergenerational social comparison; moslashuvchanroq is a recently productive formation reflecting lexical innovation in contemporary Uzbek.

Field IV: Aesthetic and Emotional Properties. This field comprises adjectives that predicate beauty, attractiveness, pleasurableness, and emotional impact: chiroyliroq, nafisroq, ko'rkamroq, go'zalroq, dilkashroq, yoqimliroq, jozibadorroq, ta'sirchanroq. Ko'ng'urov (1977) identifies comparative forms of aesthetic adjectives as the primary vehicle for the tashbeh (simile) figure in classical and modern Uzbek poetry.

(15) Erta tongning shafaqi kechki quyosh botishidan ham go'zalroq edi. (The dawn glow was even more beautiful than the evening sunset.) — The particle ham carries the meaning of 'even', amplifying the comparative beyond expectation.

(16) Ko'z yoshlar dengizdan chuqurroq, osmondan kengroq dardni yashirardi. (The tears concealed a sorrow deeper than the sea, wider than the sky.) — Two Field I adjectives (chuqur, keng) are applied metaphorically to an emotional referent, producing a transferred comparison that operates on an aesthetic-emotional register.

Field V: Quantitative and Degree Properties. The fifth field comprises adjectives that themselves encode quantity or degree: ko'proq, kamroq, ortiqroq, yuqoriroq, pastroq. These adjectives function as the Uzbek equivalents of English more, less, higher, lower and are highly frequent in scientific, statistical, and economic discourse:

(17) Bu yilgi hosil o'tgan yilgidan ikki baravar ko'proq bo'ldi. (This year's harvest was twice as large as last year's.) — The proportional intensifier ikki baravar specifies the comparative magnitude precisely.

(18) Talabalar soni o'tgan o'quv yiliga qaraganda birmuncha kamroq. (The number of students is somewhat lower than in the previous academic year.) — The mitigating intensifier birmuncha positions the comparison at the low-salience end of the degree scale.

3.4 Lexical Intensifiers and Their Semantic Functions

A system of lexical intensifiers modulates the degree expressed by the -roq suffix, determining the force and pragmatic tone of the comparative claim. Ne'matov and Rasulov (1995) treat these intensifiers as a lexical micro-field within the broader semantic field of degree modification. The system may be organised into three functional classes:

Amplifying intensifiers elevate the comparative degree: ancha (considerably), juda ham (very much so), g'oyat (greatly), nihoyatda (exceedingly), o'ta (extremely), benihoya (boundlessly). These parallel English much, far, and considerably but display greater stylistic differentiation:

(19) Yangi qurilma avvalgisidan ancha samaraliroq va g'oyat ishonchliroq ishlaydi. (The new device operates considerably more efficiently and exceedingly more reliably than the previous one.) — Two amplifying intensifiers are deployed in sequence for two separate adjectives, producing a cumulative evaluative effect.

Mitigating intensifiers reduce the comparative degree: birmuncha (somewhat), sal (slightly), ozgina (a little). These correspond to English slightly, a little, and marginally:

(20) U singlisidan sal balandroq va birmuncha to'liqroq. (She is slightly taller and somewhat heavier than her younger sister.) — Mitigating intensifiers produce a diplomatically understated comparison appropriate to contexts of social sensitivity.

Proportional intensifiers specify the comparative magnitude as a numerical ratio: ikki baravar (twice), bir necha marta (several times), uch hissa (three times as much). These correspond to English twice as and n times as:

(21) Bu mashina avvalgisidan uch baravar tezroq ishlaydi. (This machine operates three times faster than the previous one.) — The proportional intensifier converts the comparative into a ratio statement; this construction is prevalent in technical and scientific registers.

The selection of intensifier is determined not by grammatical rule but by the communicative strategy of the speaker and the contextual norms of the register. As Ne'matov and Rasulov (1995) observe, the same adjective-comparative may co-occur with either amplifying or mitigating intensifiers, with the choice indexing the speaker's pragmatic positioning rather than any objective difference in degree.

3.5 Equative Comparison: kabi, singari, -dek, -day

Uzbek encodes equative comparison — the assertion that two entities share a property to an equal degree — through the particles kabi, singari, -dek, and -day. These particles function as the Uzbek equivalents of English as...as, but they are distributed across registers in ways that have no parallel in English, and they encode a semantic nuance — resemblance rather than strict degree-equality — that differentiates them from formal equative comparison.

Kabi and singari are characteristic of formal written registers, particularly literary and journalistic prose. They typically encode qualitative or characterological resemblance rather than measured degree-equality:

(22) U otasi kabi dadil va jasur. (He is as bold and brave as his father.) — Characterological resemblance; kabi positions the father as a standard of moral comparison rather than as a precise degree-equal.

(23) Vodiy bahori Firdavsiy she'ridagi singari nafis va mo'tabar. (The spring of the valley is as delicate and venerable as that in Firdausi's poetry.) — Literary-register equative; singari introduces a textual standard from a canonical literary source.

The cliticised forms -dek and -day are characteristic of informal spoken and colloquial written registers:

(24) U sherdek kuchli va tog'dek mustahkam turar edi. (He stood there as strong as a lion and as solid as a mountain.) — Two equative comparisons in sequence; -dek encodes the simile relation in an oral-register idiom.

Dixon (1982) notes that equative comparison particles in many languages occupy a semantic intermediate zone between pure simile — which asserts resemblance without commitment to degree-equality — and formal equative comparison — which asserts strict equality of degree. The Uzbek particles sit toward the simile end of this continuum, encoding resemblance rather than strict equality. This has a direct consequence for the translation of English as...as into Uzbek: the English equative's claim of degree-equality is typically weakened to a resemblance claim in translation, a systematic — rather than occasional — source of semantic shift.

3.6 Complex and Semantically Marked Cases

Four categories of particularly complex CAP usage were identified in the corpus.

3.6.1 Absolute (Standard-Less) Comparatives. The -roq suffix frequently occurs without an overt -dan standard marker. These absolute comparatives correspond to what English grammarians call 'absolute comparatives', and they perform primarily pragmatic rather than descriptive functions:

(25) Kechroq kelolmaysanmi? (Could you come a bit later?) — Request mitigation: the comparative softens the directive force of the request. There is no explicit standard of comparison; the implicit standard is the currently scheduled time.

(26) Biroz tezroq yurish kerak edi. (We should walk a bit faster.) — Directive without explicit standard; biroz combines with -roq to produce a mild intensified directive.

3.6.2 Lexicalised Comparative Forms. Some -roq forms have undergone lexicalisation and now function as independent lexical items rather than compositional comparative forms. The most prominent example is ko'proq, which functions both as the comparative of ko'p ('many/much') and as an independent degree adverb meaning 'more' or 'mostly'. The distinction between its compositional and lexicalised readings is determined by syntactic context:

(27) Ko'proq o'qi. (Study more. / Read more.) — Adverbial reading: ko'proq modifies the verb, not an adjective, and is reanalysed as a quantificational adverb.

Nurmonov (2002) documents this grammaticalisation trajectory and relates it to broader patterns of lexical innovation in modern Uzbek.

3.6.3 Asymmetric Markedness in Antonymous Pairs. In the antonymous pair yaxshi/yomon (good/bad), the comparative forms are pragmatically asymmetric in a way that Lyons (1977) would account for through the markedness principle: the negative-pole adjective yomon carries greater pragmatic salience than the positive-pole adjective yaxshi, meaning that yomonroq (worse) communicates a stronger departure from the norm than yaxshiroq (better) communicates an improvement:

(28) Ahvoli yomonroq bo'ldi. (His condition deteriorated.) — The negative comparative implies a worrying departure from a baseline norm.

(29) Ahvoli yaxshiroq bo'ldi. (His condition improved.) — The positive comparative implies a welcome but less dramatically marked improvement.

These two sentences are not pragmatic mirror images of each other: (28) typically triggers stronger concern than (29) triggers relief, a pragmatic asymmetry grounded in the marked status of the negative pole.

3.6.4 Metaphorical and Transferred Comparatives. In literary Uzbek, -roq comparatives are frequently applied to properties in semantic domains other than those lexically specified by the adjective, producing transferred comparison in Cruse's (1986) sense:

(30) Uning ovozi bu kechaqi shamoldan ham sovuqroq edi. (His voice was even colder than the wind of that night.) — Physical temperature is predicated of an auditory stimulus; synesthesia and metaphor combine to produce an aesthetically intensified negative characterisation.

(31) So'zlardan toshlar yengilroq tuyuldi. (Stones felt lighter than words.) — Physical weight is applied to an abstract entity (words); the comparison generates a paradox that the literary context resolves as metaphorical commentary on the weight of language.

3.7 Register-Conditioned Variation

The deployment of Uzbek CAPs varies systematically across registers, with differences observable in intensifier selection, overt specification of the standard, and the semantic field of the adjective.

In **scientific and academic discourse**, CAPs are characterised by overt specification of the -dan standard, use of proportional or quantitative intensifiers, and adjectives from Fields I and V:

(32) Mazkur ko'rsatkich o'tgan davrga nisbatan 14 foizga yuqoriroq qayd etildi. (The present indicator has been recorded at a level 14% higher than in the previous period.) — The proportional standard (14%) is explicitly quantified; the register is impersonal and informative.

In **journalistic and persuasive discourse**, CAPs are deployed rhetorically, often with vague or implicit standards and amplifying intensifiers:

(33) Mamlakatimiz yangi siyosatlar tufayli avvalgidan kuchliroq, xalq esa ertangi kunga ishonchliroq qarayapti. (Our country is stronger thanks to the new policies, and the people look to the future with greater confidence.) — Two parallel CAPs without quantified standards produce an optimistic rhetorical effect; the implicit standard is a vague 'former state'.

In **literary discourse**, CAPs are used for aesthetic, metaphorical, and emotionally intensifying purposes, with unconventional adjective-standard pairings and transferred comparative applications:

(34) Ko'z yoshlar dengizdan chuqurroq, osmondan kengroq dardni yashirardi. (The tears concealed a sorrow deeper than the sea, wider than the sky.) — Two Field I adjectives applied to an emotional referent through transferred comparison; the literary register licenses this semantic crossing.

In **spoken and colloquial discourse**, CAPs appear with elliptical standards, pragmatic mitigation functions, and discourse particles that mark the comparative as socially interactive:

(35) Shu tomondagisi yaxshiroq-da. (This one over here is better, you know.) — The discourse particle -da marks the comparative as a socially positioned assessment inviting agreement rather than an objective description.

4. Discussion

4.1 Typological Distinctiveness of the Uzbek Comparative System

The results confirm that the Uzbek comparative system is typologically distinctive in ways that align with Croft's (2003) parametric account of comparative constructions. The use of a case-marked postposition (-dan) rather than a subordinating particle to introduce the standard of comparison is consistent with the agglutinative-Turkic typological profile and positions Uzbek in a typological cluster that includes Turkish, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz. The practical consequence for contrastive analysis is that Uzbek comparative constructions are uniformly monoclausal — a typological feature that eliminates the syntactic complexity of English comparative clauses but also forecloses the pragmatic resources that English exploits in biclausal comparatives, including contrastive focus, ellipsis licensing, and the subordinate-clause gradation of the standard.

The allomorphic uniformity of -roq — which applies to adjectives of any syllable count and phonological structure — is a further typological distinctive. English -er is restricted to adjectives of one or two syllables, and English more is required for polysyllabic adjectives; the category-selection problem this creates for learners has no analogue in Uzbek, though Uzbek learners of English must acquire the selection rule as new morphological knowledge.

4.2 The Semantic Scope of -roq Beyond Degree Comparison

One of the most significant findings of this study concerns the extended pragmatic uses of the -roq suffix documented in Section 3.1. The use of -roq as a politeness mitigator (example 2) and as an absolute intensifier without an explicit comparative standard (example 3) are functions that have no parallel in English -er. These extended uses suggest that -roq has a broader functional range than its formal English equivalent, operating not merely as a degree-comparative marker but as a scalar hedging device with pragmatic functions in request mitigation, directive softening, and contextual intensification. This finding has direct implications for the teaching of Uzbek to English-speaking learners, who may inappropriately project the English -er function onto all uses of -roq.

4.3 The Equative-Simile Continuum

The analysis of equative comparative particles (kabi, singari, -dek, -day) supports Dixon's (1982) observation that many languages position their equative comparison markers on a continuum between strict degree-equality and resemblance-simile. The Uzbek particles sit closer to the simile end of this continuum than English as...as, encoding resemblance or characterological equivalence rather than strict degree-equality. This creates a systematic — and previously underdocumented — source of semantic shift in English-Uzbek translation: the English equative comparative's claim of degree-equality is regularly weakened to a resemblance claim when rendered through Uzbek kabi or -dek, a loss that is invisible to translators who focus on formal equivalence rather than semantic equivalence.

4.4 Complex Cases and Their Theoretical Implications

The four categories of semantically complex CAP usage identified in Section 3.6 each illuminate a different dimension of the interaction between morphological form, lexical semantics, and pragmatic function. Absolute comparatives without an overt standard demonstrate that -roq is not semantically vacuous in the absence of a -dan standard marker: it retains its scalar function but redirects it toward pragmatic rather than descriptive ends. Lexicalised comparative forms (ko'proq as an adverb) illustrate the grammaticalisation processes through which inflectional morphology can feed into the lexicon. Asymmetric markedness in antonymous pairs reveals that the pragmatic impact of a comparative construction is not symmetrical across antonymous poles, a finding consistent with Lyons's (1977) markedness theory. Transferred comparatives demonstrate the expressive potential that becomes available when the semantic constraint on adjective-domain correspondence is deliberately violated in literary contexts.

4.5 Pedagogical Implications

These findings have direct implications for the teaching of Uzbek comparative constructions. First, the morphological uniformity of -roq should be exploited pedagogically as a learner advantage relative to English, where the synthetic-periphrastic alternation constitutes a significant early acquisition target. Second, the pragmatic extensions of -roq — particularly its mitigation and absolute-intensification functions — should be explicitly taught, since English-speaking learners are unlikely to infer these uses from their knowledge of English -er. Third, the equative particles (kabi, singari, -dek, -day) should be taught with attention to their register distribution and their semantic positioning on the simile-equative continuum, to prevent learners from treating them as straightforward equivalents of English as...as.

5. Conclusion

This study has provided a systematic lexical-semantic account of comparative adjective phrases in contemporary Uzbek, analysing the morphological core of the system (the -roq suffix and the -dan ablative), its semantic field distribution (five fields, from physical-spatial to quantitative), its intensifier system, its equative construction types, its complex and marked usages, and its register-conditioned variation. The principal findings may be summarised as follows.

The -roq suffix is morphologically uniform, phonologically conditioned in its allomorphic realisation, and semantically versatile: it encodes both denotative degree-comparison and connotative evaluative excess, and it extends beyond these core functions to pragmatic mitigation, absolute intensification, and — in literary contexts — the expression of paradoxical absolute-state comparison.

The -dan ablative postposition marks the standard of comparison in a typologically characteristic Turkic pattern that contrasts with English than in grammatical category, syntactic scope, and the structural complexity it permits.

The five-field semantic taxonomy proposed in this study organises Uzbek comparative adjectives into physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and quantitative fields, each with characteristic intensifier profiles, register preferences, and semantic properties.

The equative particles kabi, singari, -dek, -day encode resemblance rather than strict degree-equality, positioning them on the simile end of the simile-equative continuum and creating a systematic source of semantic shift in English-Uzbek translation.

Four categories of semantically and pragmatically complex usage — absolute comparatives, lexicalised forms, asymmetrically marked antonymous pairs, and transferred metaphorical comparatives — reveal the full depth of the Uzbek comparative system's expressive potential and highlight phenomena that have theoretical implications beyond the description of a single language.

Taken together, these findings provide a richer and more differentiated account of Uzbek comparative adjective phrases than has previously been available, and they establish a principled basis for the contrastive analysis of the English-Uzbek comparative systems that Section 2.3 of the broader study will develop.