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NOUNS IN MODERN ENGLISH: STRUCTURAL, SEMANTIC AND FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Nouns represent one of the most fundamental grammatical categories in the English language system. They play a central role in naming people, objects, places, ideas, and abstract concepts. This article examines the structural, semantic, and functional characteristics of nouns in modern English. The research focuses on the classification of nouns, their grammatical features, and their importance in sentence formation and communication. Special attention is given to common nouns, proper nouns, concrete nouns, abstract nouns, countable and uncountable nouns, collective nouns, and compound nouns. The article also provides a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek noun systems in order to identify similarities and differences between the two languages. The findings demonstrate that although nouns exist as universal linguistic categories, their grammatical expression and usage vary according to the structural features of each language. The study highlights the importance of understanding nouns for language learning, translation, and effective communication.
Keywords: noun, English grammar, linguistic category, morphology, syntax, semantics, countable nouns, comparative linguistics.

Introduction: Language is a complex system consisting of different grammatical and lexical categories that allow people to express thoughts, communicate information, and describe the world around them. Among these categories, nouns occupy a central position because they represent the names of objects, individuals, places, events, and concepts.

A noun is traditionally defined as a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea. However, modern linguistic studies show that nouns perform much more than simple naming functions. They participate in sentence structures, express grammatical relationships, and contribute to the organization of meaning.

For example: “Students study linguistics.”

In this sentence, the noun “students” represents participants, while “linguistics” represents an abstract field of knowledge.

Nouns are considered one of the largest lexical categories in English. Unlike closed grammatical categories such as pronouns or articles, nouns constantly expand because new words appear with the development of science, technology, and society.

The correct use of nouns is essential for communication because they provide the main information in sentences. Without nouns, it would be impossible to identify people, objects, or ideas.

The aim of this article is to analyze the structural, semantic, and functional features of English nouns and to compare them with Uzbek noun structures.

The objectives of the research are:

- to define the concept of nouns in English grammar;
- to analyze different classifications of nouns;
- to examine grammatical features of nouns;
- to investigate their syntactic and semantic functions;
- to compare English and Uzbek noun systems.

Literature Review: Nouns have been widely studied in traditional and modern linguistics. Many grammarians consider nouns as one of the major parts of speech because of their important role in sentence organization.

According to Quirk et al., nouns form a large lexical class that includes words referring to physical objects, living beings, places, and abstract concepts. They emphasize that nouns have specific grammatical characteristics such as number, case, and determinative relationships.

Huddleston and Pullum describe nouns as elements that typically function as heads of noun phrases. A noun phrase may include determiners, adjectives, and other modifiers.

For example: “The beautiful old building”

The noun “building” is the main element of the phrase, while the other words provide additional information.

Modern linguistic research also focuses on the semantic classification of nouns. Scholars distinguish between concrete and abstract nouns because they represent different types of meanings.

Concrete nouns refer to physically existing entities: book, table, student

Abstract nouns represent ideas and concepts: knowledge, freedom, happiness

Comparative studies show that nouns exist in all languages, but their grammatical forms differ. English expresses grammatical relations mainly through word order and auxiliary elements, while Uzbek frequently uses morphological markers.

Theoretical Background of Nouns

A noun is a lexical and grammatical category that identifies entities, concepts, and phenomena. It is one of the primary parts of speech in English.

Nouns have several important grammatical features:

- number possession; case; syntactic function.
- **Number of Nouns:** English nouns usually have two grammatical numbers:
- singular;

plural.

Singular refers to one person or object:

Book student city

Plural refers to more than one:

Books students cities

Most English plural nouns are formed by adding: -s or -es

Examples: car → cars class → classes

However, some nouns have irregular plural forms:

man → men woman → women child → children mouse → mice

Possessive Form of Nouns

English nouns can express possession using the apostrophe structure.

Examples: John’s book The teacher’s office

Plural possessive: Students’ projects Children’s games

Possessive forms show relationships between people, objects, or ideas.

Case of Nouns

Modern English has a limited case system compared with many other languages.

The main noun case distinction is:

- common case;
- possessive case.

Example:

Common case: The student opened the book.

Possessive case: The student’s book is interesting.

Classification of English Nouns

English nouns can be classified according to meaning, form, and grammatical features.

Common Nouns

Common nouns refer to general names of people, places, and things.

Examples: Teacher city computer book

They are usually written with lowercase letters unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence.

Proper Nouns

Proper nouns refer to specific names of people, places, organizations, or events.

Examples: London John English Asia

Proper nouns always begin with capital letters.

They identify unique entities.

Concrete Nouns

Concrete nouns refer to objects that can be perceived through senses.

Examples: apple car house flower

They represent physical realities.

Abstract Nouns: Abstract nouns express ideas, emotions, qualities, or states.

Examples: love education beauty success

They cannot usually be touched or physically observed.

Functional Characteristics of Nouns

Nouns perform different grammatical functions in sentences.

Nouns as Subjects

A noun can function as the subject of a sentence.

Example: "The student completed the assignment."

The noun "student" performs the action.

Another example: "Knowledge improves human life."

The noun "knowledge" represents the main topic of the sentence.

Nouns as Objects: Nouns can function as objects receiving an action.

Example: "The teacher explained the lesson."

"The lesson" is the object of the verb.

Objects are important because they provide additional information about actions.

Nouns after Prepositions

Nouns can appear after prepositions.

Examples: She works at the university. They travelled to London.

The noun following the preposition completes the meaning of the phrase.

Nouns as Complements

Nouns can also function as complements after linking verbs.

Examples: He is a doctor. She became a researcher.

In these sentences, nouns identify or describe the subject.

Semantic Features of Nouns

Nouns have different semantic characteristics depending on what they represent.

Concrete Meaning: Concrete nouns refer to things that exist physically.

Examples: Tree phone house student

They can usually be experienced through the senses

Abstract Meaning: Abstract nouns represent non-physical concepts.

Examples: freedom culture knowledge development

Abstract nouns are especially common in academic writing.

Example: "Education plays an important role in society."

Human and Non-Human Reference

Nouns can refer to humans or non-human entities.

Human nouns: teacher doctor student

Non-human nouns: Book computer building
This distinction influences the use of pronouns and grammatical structures.

Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Nouns

English and Uzbek both contain nouns as one of the main parts of speech. However, their grammatical systems have important differences.

Similarities: Both languages use nouns to express:
people; objects; places; ideas; concepts.
Examples:
English: student, book, city
Uzbek: talaba, kitob, shahar
Both languages distinguish singular and plural meanings.
English: book → books
Uzbek: kitob → kitoblar

Differences in Number Formation

English usually forms plurals with suffixes:
book → books car → cars
Uzbek forms plurals mainly with: -lar / -lar
Examples: kitob → kitoblar o‘qituvchi → o‘qituvchilar

Differences in Case System

One of the biggest differences is the case system.
English nouns mainly have: common case; possessive case.
Example: student student’s book
Uzbek nouns have several grammatical cases:
Bosh kelishik: kitob
Tushum kelishigi: kitobni
Jo‘nalish kelishigi: kitobga
O‘rin-payt kelishigi: kitobda
Chiqish kelishigi: kitobdan
Therefore, Uzbek expresses grammatical relations through suffixes, while English often uses word order and prepositions.

Differences in Articles: English nouns are often connected with articles:
a book the book an apple
Uzbek does not have articles.
Example:
English: I bought a book.
Uzbek: Men kitob sotib oldim.
This difference creates challenges for Uzbek learners of English.

Methodology and Practical Analysis

This research applies descriptive and comparative methods to analyze English nouns and their Uzbek equivalents.
The analysis demonstrates that nouns are essential elements of sentence construction.
Example: “The scientist discovered a new method.”
The noun “scientist” identifies the performer, while “method” identifies the object.
Another example: “Knowledge is power.”
The noun “knowledge” represents an abstract concept and functions as the subject.
In academic communication, nouns are especially important because scientific texts require precise naming of concepts and processes.
Examples: research Analysis development technology
These nouns frequently appear in scientific writing.

Discussion

The study shows that nouns are among the most important linguistic categories in English. They provide the foundation of sentence meaning and allow speakers to describe reality.

The classification of nouns demonstrates their diversity. Nouns can represent physical objects, abstract concepts, groups, materials, and complex ideas.

For language learners, several difficulties may occur:

- plural formation; countable and uncountable distinctions;
- article usage; possessive forms.

For example: Incorrect: I need an advice.

Correct: I need some advice.

Such mistakes occur because noun systems differ between languages.

A deep understanding of noun structures helps learners improve grammar, vocabulary, translation, and academic writing skills.

Conclusion: Nouns are fundamental components of the English language system. They perform important lexical, grammatical, and communicative functions. Through nouns, speakers identify people, objects, places, ideas, and concepts.

This article has analyzed the structural, semantic, and functional characteristics of English nouns. The study examined different noun classifications, including common, proper, concrete, abstract, countable, uncountable, collective, and compound nouns.

The comparative analysis between English and Uzbek demonstrates that both languages share similar principles in noun usage, but their grammatical realization differs. English mainly depends on word order, articles, and limited case forms, while Uzbek uses a richer system of suffixes and grammatical cases.

Understanding nouns is essential for successful language learning and effective communication. Nouns remain a central area of linguistic research because they connect grammar, meaning, and human experience.

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