

Linguistic Features of Fake News in Uzbek and English: A Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Analysis

Hayitova Xurshida Ibodullayevna

+998 97 384 52 53

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АННОТАЦИЯ:

This article examines the lexical, semantic, and syntactic features of fake news in Uzbek and English. With the rapid development of digital technologies and social media, fake news has become a significant issue in modern communication. The study focuses on the use of emotionally charged vocabulary, evaluative expressions, exaggeration, ambiguity, metaphor, and misleading word choices in fake news. It also analyzes syntactic structures, including short sentences, rhetorical questions, exclamations, and sentence patterns used to attract readers' attention and influence their opinions. Furthermore, the article compares the linguistic characteristics of fake news in Uzbek and English, identifying similarities and potential differences in the ways misleading information is expressed. The research employs descriptive, comparative, lexical-semantic, and syntactic analysis methods. The findings may contribute to a better understanding of the linguistic mechanisms of fake news, the development of media literacy, and the ability to recognize misleading information.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information technologies and social media has significantly changed the ways people produce, distribute, and consume news. Online platforms allow information to reach large audiences within a short period. However, these opportunities also facilitate the circulation of fake news, including fabricated stories, misleading headlines, and information presented without sufficient context. Fake news can influence public understanding, shape attitudes, and reduce trust in media sources. From a linguistic perspective, fake news is important because language does more than communicate

information. Vocabulary, sentence structure, semantic associations, and rhetorical devices can influence how readers interpret a message. For example, emotionally charged words may encourage readers to react before examining the evidence, while exaggerated expressions can make an event appear more serious or unusual than the available facts support. The lexical features of fake news include evaluative adjectives, emotionally charged nouns, intensifying adverbs, and verbs that suggest conflict, danger, or urgency. Semantic features involve exaggeration, ambiguity, metaphor, presupposition, and meanings that are implied rather than directly stated. Syntactic features include short and emphatic sentences, rhetorical questions, exclamations, and structures that emphasize selected information. Although these linguistic features can occur in both accurate and inaccurate news, their use in fake news may contribute to misleading interpretations when combined with unsupported claims or deceptive framing. Therefore, linguistic features alone cannot establish whether a news item is false; the factual accuracy and reliability of its sources must also be examined. The purpose of this study is to analyze the lexical, semantic, and syntactic features of fake news in Uzbek and English and to identify similarities and possible differences between the two languages. The study addresses three research questions:

1. What lexical features are used in Uzbek and English fake news?
2. How do semantic devices contribute to the presentation of misleading information?
3. What syntactic structures are used to attract readers' attention and influence their interpretation of news?

METHODS

This study adopts a descriptive and comparative linguistic approach to examine the lexical, semantic, and syntactic characteristics of fake news in Uzbek and English. The analysis is organized around three main linguistic levels: vocabulary, meaning, and sentence structure. The lexical analysis focuses on emotionally charged vocabulary, evaluative expressions, intensifiers, and words associated with fear, surprise, conflict, or urgency. Such expressions are examined in context to determine how they may influence readers' perceptions of reported events. The semantic analysis investigates exaggeration, metaphor, ambiguity, presupposition, and implied meaning. It considers how a headline or news statement may encourage a particular interpretation without explicitly presenting sufficient evidence to support it. The syntactic analysis examines sentence length, sentence type, rhetorical questions, exclamations, and word order. Particular attention is given to structures that emphasize certain details, create a sense of urgency, or encourage readers to accept a claim without further verification. The comparative method is used to examine examples in Uzbek and English, focusing on similarities and differences in the linguistic strategies identified. Examples should be collected from publicly accessible news websites and social media posts and checked against reliable sources or fact-checking organizations before being classified as fake or misleading. The analysis should consider the original language, publication context, source reliability, and factual evidence. For a systematic investigation, the collected examples

can be organized into a dataset containing the original statement, language, source, context, linguistic feature, and interpretation. Each example can then be coded according to its lexical, semantic, and syntactic characteristics. If quantitative results are reported, the number of analyzed examples and the frequency of each feature should be provided. This procedure would support a more transparent and reproducible comparison.

RESULTS

The analytical framework identifies several linguistic features that may be relevant to the study of fake news in Uzbek and English. The following observations describe the categories to be examined; they should not be interpreted as verified empirical findings until a dataset has been analyzed. Emotionally charged vocabulary is an important category for examining fake news discourse. Words associated with danger, scandal, disaster, or unexpected events may attract attention and encourage an immediate emotional response. Intensifiers and evaluative expressions can also increase the perceived importance of a claim. For example, English expressions such as “shocking discovery,” “unbelievable event,” and “terrible crisis” may create a dramatic impression. Comparable Uzbek expressions, such as “dahshatli voqea,” “shov-shuvli xabar,” and “aql bovar qilmaydigan hodisa,” can serve similar rhetorical purposes. These expressions are not necessarily misleading in themselves; their function depends on whether they accurately represent the event and are supported by evidence.

Semantic strategies include exaggeration, metaphor, ambiguity, and implied meanings. Exaggeration presents an event as more significant or extreme than the evidence justifies. Metaphors may frame an issue in terms of conflict, danger, or catastrophe. Ambiguous expressions can allow readers to draw conclusions that the original statement does not explicitly establish. For instance, a headline that describes a minor event as a “national disaster” may create a misleading impression if the description is disproportionate to the facts. Similarly, a headline that suggests a direct causal relationship between two events may mislead readers when the available evidence establishes only that the events occurred at the same time. Semantic analysis therefore requires attention not only to the literal meaning of words but also to the interpretations encouraged by the overall message and its context.

Syntactic structures can influence the way readers process information. Short sentences, exclamations, rhetorical questions, and emphatic word order may make a message appear urgent or dramatic. Headlines formulated as questions can also suggest a particular conclusion without directly asserting it. For example, “Is This the Biggest Scandal of the Year?” invites readers to consider a dramatic interpretation, although the question itself does not provide evidence. In Uzbek, a comparable structure might be “Bu yilning eng katta mojarosimi?” The pragmatic effect depends on the surrounding context and the information presented in the article. Short and direct sentences may also make claims easier to remember and share. However, sentence length and rhetorical form cannot independently determine whether a news report is false. Their significance must be assessed alongside lexical choices, semantic implications, and factual accuracy.

The Uzbek-English comparison can examine how similar communicative functions are expressed through different lexical items, grammatical patterns, and rhetorical conventions. Both languages provide resources for emotional evaluation, exaggeration, ambiguity, and emphasis. Potential differences may relate to word choice, the use of intensifiers, sentence organization, and culturally specific expressions. Nevertheless, these differences should be established through systematic analysis rather than assumed in advance. A balanced comparison should consider the topic, genre, platform, and intended audience of each example.

DISCUSSION

The analysis framework demonstrates why fake news should be examined at several linguistic levels. Lexical analysis helps identify words that express strong evaluation or emotion. Semantic analysis explains how a statement may convey implications beyond its literal meaning. Syntactic analysis reveals how sentence structure and rhetorical form organize information and direct readers' attention. These levels often interact. An emotionally charged word may create an initial reaction, an exaggerated semantic frame may strengthen that reaction, and an emphatic sentence structure may make the message more memorable. When these features accompany unsupported claims, misleading sources, or the omission of relevant context, they may contribute to the persuasive force of fake news. The comparison between Uzbek and English is valuable because it can distinguish broadly shared rhetorical resources from language-specific forms of expression. At the same time, conclusions about differences between the languages require a sufficiently large and balanced dataset. Differences in source selection, subject matter, publication dates, and platform conventions could otherwise influence the results. An important limitation is that linguistic features are not exclusive to fake news. Reliable journalism also uses emotional language, rhetorical questions, metaphors, and concise headlines. Consequently, the identification of a particular linguistic feature should not be treated as proof of misinformation. Linguistic analysis should be combined with fact-checking, source evaluation, and contextual interpretation. The practical implications of this research concern media literacy and critical reading. Readers can be encouraged to identify emotionally charged wording, distinguish facts from interpretations, question exaggerated claims, examine the evidence behind causal statements, and verify information through independent sources. These skills can help audiences recognize potentially manipulative language without automatically rejecting information simply because it uses persuasive rhetorical devices.

CONCLUSION

This article outlines a comparative approach to the lexical, semantic, and syntactic features of fake news in Uzbek and English. The proposed framework focuses on emotionally charged vocabulary, evaluative expressions, exaggeration, metaphor, ambiguity, rhetorical questions, exclamations, and emphatic sentence structures. These linguistic resources may influence

readers' emotional responses and interpretations, particularly when used to present unsupported or misleading claims.

The study also emphasizes that similarities and differences between Uzbek and English should be established through systematic analysis of authentic examples. Since the same linguistic devices can occur in both reliable and unreliable journalism, they must be interpreted in context and assessed alongside factual evidence. Further research should analyze a balanced corpus of Uzbek and English news items, apply consistent coding criteria, and report quantitative findings where appropriate. Such research could contribute to a deeper understanding of misleading media discourse and support the development of media literacy and critical information-evaluation skills.

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