

# A Contrastive Study of Foregrounding in English And Uzbek Languages

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**Abstract:** Foregrounding is a linguistic and stylistic phenomenon that intentionally deviates from conventional language norms to create emphasis, aesthetic appeal, or emotional impact. This paper conducts a comprehensive contrastive analysis of foregrounding techniques in English and Uzbek, examining grammatical structures, lexical innovations, and stylistic devices in literary and media texts. The study reveals that English foregrounding frequently relies on syntactic rearrangements, phonetic patterns, and lexical creativity, whereas Uzbek employs morphological flexibility, proverbial parallelism, and culturally embedded metaphors. By comparing these strategies, the research highlights how linguistic typology and cultural context shape rhetorical expression. The findings contribute to cross-linguistic stylistics, offering insights into how different languages manipulate form and meaning for artistic and communicative effects.

**Keywords:** Foregrounding, deviation, parallelism, contrastive linguistics, stylistics, English, Uzbek.

**Introduction:** Foregrounding, a key concept in stylistics and literary linguistics, refers to the deliberate use of linguistic deviations to make certain elements of a text stand out. Originating from the Prague School of structuralism (Mukařovský, 1964), foregrounding operates through two primary mechanisms: deviation (breaking linguistic norms) and parallelism (repetition for rhythmic or emphatic effect). The Prague School of Linguistics of Czechoslovakia (1926-1948) played a decisive role in the development of the theory of promotion. This concept is systematically described in Jean Mukarzhovsky's work "The Norms of Artistic Language" (1932). Mukarzhovsky emphasizes that any literary text deliberately deviates from the standard use of language and creates a unique artistic world through this system of deviations. In his opinion, there is a fundamental difference between the communicative function of language and its poetic function - the first is aimed at conveying content, while the second focuses attention on the language itself.

Roman Jakobson developed this idea, highlighting six functions of language. According to him, the poetic function is directed at the message itself, and this feature is especially evident in poetry. In the article

"Linguistics and Poetics" (1960), Jakobson explains that the phenomenon of foregrounding is carried out by changing the interrelationships of linguistic signs.

Russian linguists of the Soviet period interpreted the concept of foregrounding in their own way. Viktor Vinogradov, in his work "Theory of Artistic Speech" (1971), analyzed the writer's style as the degree of deviation from language norms. In his opinion, each major writer has a unique "language portrait," which is formed through the writer's methods of violating language norms. In his work "The Structure of a Literary Text" (1970), Yuri Lotman studied foregrounding from a semiotic point of view and defined any literary text as a "system of systems." In his opinion, any deviation in the text creates new meanings and increases the semiotic density of the text. Lotman understood foregrounding as a mechanism for transmitting cultural codes. One of the modern Uzbek linguists, Shukhrat Sirojiddinov, in his book "Speech Styles" (2015), analyzed the change in foregrounding tools in modern Uzbek prose. According to him, deviations from classical grammatical rules are more common in modern Uzbek prose. For example, violation of word order, use of incomplete sentences, syntactic

abbreviations in dialogue parts are widespread. These trends show that they are developing under the influence of global literary trends.

From a linguistic perspective, foregrounding is crucial for understanding the artistic and communicative functions of language. This concept allows us to explain how language units serve to create meaning in speech not only semantically, but also structurally. Foregrounding serves as an important methodological tool for linguistics to understand how new meanings can be created by deviating from language norms, as well as how certain elements can be highlighted in speech. In particular, in the fields of pragmatic linguistics and discourse analysis, foregrounding is studied as a mechanism for highlighting important information in speech.

The concept of foregrounding is also important in understanding the creative use of language. It allows us to understand how language works as a means of artistic expression, in addition to simple communicative tasks. In linguistic research, foregrounding in speech

While foregrounding has been widely studied in English and other Indo-European languages, its application in Turkic languages, particularly Uzbek, remains under-researched. This paper aims to fill this gap by conducting a systematic comparison of foregrounding techniques in English and Uzbek, analyzing how each language employs stylistic deviations to achieve rhetorical and aesthetic effects. The study draws on examples from literature, poetry, and media discourse to illustrate the distinct yet overlapping strategies used in these two typologically different languages. Foregrounding theory suggests that artistic and rhetorical language intentionally disrupts ordinary speech patterns to evoke aesthetic, emotional, or cognitive responses (Leech & Short, 2007). The two main mechanisms of foregrounding are deviation and parallelism. Deviation occurs when a writer or speaker violates grammatical, lexical, or phonological norms, creating an unexpected effect that captures attention. Parallelism, on the other hand, involves the repetition of structures—such as syntax, sound, or semantic patterns—to create rhythm, cohesion, or emphasis. These techniques are universal in literature and persuasive discourse but manifest differently across languages due to structural and cultural differences.

English foregrounding frequently exploits syntactic flexibility, lexical creativity, and phonetic play. For example: Syntactic inversion disrupts conventional word order for dramatic effect, as in Shakespeare's "Never was seen so black a day as this" (instead of "A day as black as this was never seen").

Lexical deviations include coinages like James Joyce's "scrotumtightening" or Orwell's "doublethink", where new words are formed to convey unique meanings.

Phonetic foregrounding relies on alliteration ("wild and woolly"), assonance ("The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain"), and onomatopoeia ("buzz", "whisper") to enhance musicality and memorability.

Uzbek, as an agglutinative Turkic language, employs morphological richness, proverbial structures, and cultural imagery for foregrounding. Key techniques include:

- a) Morphological play: Affixation allows for creative word formations, such as adding exaggerated suffixes for poetic effect (e.g., "sevgi-lar-imiz-dan" ["from our many loves"] where affixes intensify emotional expression).
- b) Parallelism in folk poetry: Traditional Uzbek verse, like "beyt" or "doston", relies on repetitive syntactic and rhythmic structures (e.g., "Yor-yor, yorim, yor-yor" ["Beloved, oh beloved"]).
- c) Cultural metaphors: Nature-based imagery (e.g., "sochlari bulut" ["your hair is like a cloud"]) is deeply rooted in classical Uzbek poetry, particularly in the works of Alisher Navoiy.

English often uses syntactic rearrangements to shift focus or create dramatic tension. For instance, passive-to-active transformations ("The city was destroyed by the storm" vs. "The storm destroyed the city") alter emphasis, while cleft sentences ("It was the king who betrayed us") highlight specific elements. Additionally, ellipsis ("Out with the old, in with the new") and fragmentation ("Winter. Cold. Silence.") are common in modernist poetry and advertising slogans.

Uzbek, with its flexible SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) structure, manipulates word order and case markers for foregrounding. For example, placing the object before the subject ("Kitobni men o'qidim" ["The book, I read it"]) emphasizes the object, whereas standard order ("Men kitobni o'qidim") follows neutral syntax. Uzbek also uses verbal affixes to create nuanced emphasis, such as adding "-chi" to denote habitual action ("u har kuni keladi" ["he comes every day"] vs. "u har kuni kel-chi" ["he always comes"]).

English employs compound words, blends, and semantic shifts for creative expression. Neologisms like "smog" (smoke + fog) or "brunch" (breakfast + lunch) demonstrate lexical innovation, while archaic or dialectal words ("thou", "ain't") add stylistic flavor. Metaphorical extensions ("time is a thief") and oxymorons ("deafening silence") further enrich textual layers.

Uzbek foregrounding relies on reduplication ("qizil-qizil

gular” [bright red flowers]), onomatopoeia (“sharqirat” [to sparkle]), and borrowings from Persian/Arabic for elevated style (“muhabbat” [love] instead of “sevgi”). Classical poetry often uses synonym pairs (“dil-u jon” [“heart and soul”]) for rhythmic parallelism.

Foregrounding plays an important role not only as a theoretical concept, but also in the application of advanced linguistic methodologies. It is one of the main tools used in speech analysis, in particular, in understanding literary texts, political speeches, advertising and mass communication materials. For example, in research on corpus linguistics, algorithms for automatic detection of foregrounding methods are being developed, which allow computer analysis of the stylistic features of texts. Also, in the field of contrastive linguistics, by comparing foregrounding strategies in different languages, a deeper understanding of the typological differences of languages is achieved. This theory is also applied in the methodology of language teaching - by understanding foregrounding phenomena, foreign language learners master not only grammatical rules, but also the possibilities of artistic expression of the language.

## **RESOURCES**

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