

Communicative-Pragmatic Functions of Hyponymy in English And Uzbek Media Texts

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Received: 19 August 2026; **Accepted:** 15 September 2026; **Published:** 08 October 2026

Abstract: This article examines the communicative-pragmatic functions of hyponymy in English and Uzbek media texts. Hyponymy is usually studied as a paradigmatic relation within the lexical system; this study treats it as a discourse resource that journalists deploy to achieve specific communicative aims. The research material consists of news reports, analytical articles and headlines from English-language (BBC News, The Guardian,) and Uzbek-language (Kun.uz, Xalq so'zi) online media. Contextual, component, comparative and discourse-pragmatic analyses were applied. The results identify six recurrent functions of hyponymic units in media discourse: cohesive-referential, specifying-informative, generalizing-economizing, evaluative-framing, mitigating (euphemistic) and persuasive-intensifying. Both languages share these functions, yet they realize them differently. English media favour anaphoric hyperonymic substitution of proper names ("the carmaker", "the 45-year-old") as a means of stylistic variation, whereas Uzbek media rely on demonstrative-plus-hyperonym constructions ("mazkur tashkilot", "ushbu loyiha"), paired words with a collective-hyperonymic meaning ("meva-sabzavot") and abstract hyperonyms typical of the official style ("chora-tadbirlar", "soha"). The findings contribute to comparative lexical semantics, media linguistics and translation practice.

Keywords: Hyponymy, hyperonym, media text, communicative function, pragmatics, cohesion, framing, English, Uzbek, comparative analysis.

Introduction: Media discourse is one of the most dynamic spheres of language use. A news text must inform quickly, hold the reader's attention, remain economical in form and, explicitly or implicitly, shape the reader's attitude to events. Lexical choices are central to all these tasks. Among the lexical-semantic relations that journalists exploit, hyponymy, the relation of inclusion between a generic term (hyperonym) and a specific term (hyponym), occupies a special place, because every act of naming forces the writer to choose a level of generality: a Toyota Camry, the car, the vehicle or the transport.

In classical structural semantics hyponymy is defined as a paradigmatic relation of inclusion: the meaning of the hyponym contains the meaning of the hyperonym plus at least one differentiating feature [10; 3]. Cruse [3; 4]

described taxonomic and non-taxonomic hyponymy and showed that the relation is sensitive to context. Murphy [11] further argued that semantic relations are better understood as metalinguistic knowledge that speakers activate in use rather than as fixed links in the lexicon. Cognitive research on categorization [14] demonstrated that speakers prefer a "basic level" of categorization (dog rather than animal or spaniel), and that departures from this level are communicatively marked.

At the text level, hyponymy has been studied primarily as a means of lexical cohesion. Halliday and Hasan [7] listed superordinate terms among the types of reiteration, and Hoey [8] showed how lexical relations create networks that bind sentences into text. Media linguistics, in turn, has demonstrated that lexical choice in news is never neutral: it reflects ideological

positioning and constructs a particular version of events [15; 5; 2; 1].

In Uzbek linguistics, lexical-semantic relations have been examined within the systemic-structural approach to the lexicon [12; 13], and the semantic structure of Uzbek words is documented in the five-volume explanatory dictionary [16]. However, the functioning of hyponymic units in Uzbek media texts, and their comparison with English media usage, has not yet received systematic attention.

This gap defines the aim of the present study: to identify and compare the communicative-pragmatic functions of hyponymy in English and Uzbek media texts. The objectives are: (1) to describe the types of hyponymic units used in media texts of both languages; (2) to classify their communicative-pragmatic functions; (3) to establish common and language-specific means of realizing these functions; and (4) to outline implications for translation and media-language teaching.

METHODS

The material comprises a comparable corpus of English and Uzbek online media texts published in 2024–2026. The English sub-corpus includes news reports, analytical articles and headlines from BBC News, The Guardian. The Uzbek sub-corpus includes texts of the same genres from Kun.uz and the national newspaper Xalq so'zi. Texts were selected on four recurring thematic areas so that the two sub-corpora are comparable: economy and trade, transport and incidents, health, and social policy. [Indicate here the exact number of texts and words in each sub-corpus.]

A hyponymic unit was registered when a text contained at least two lexemes standing in a relation of inclusion and referring to the same object, class or situation (e.g. Tesla – the carmaker; olma, o'rik, gilos – mevalar), or when a hyperonym was used instead of an available, more specific name. Dictionary definitions from the Oxford English Dictionary and "O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati" [16] were used to verify the genus–species relation.

The following methods were applied:

1. Component (semantic feature) analysis to establish the inclusion relation between the members of each pair;

2. Contextual analysis to determine the referent and the direction of substitution (specific → generic or generic → specific);

3. Discourse-pragmatic analysis to identify the communicative aim behind the choice of the level of generality, drawing on Grice's maxims of quantity and manner [6] and on Leech's principles of pragmatics [9];

4. Comparative analysis to establish common and language-specific means of realizing each function in English and Uzbek.

Each occurrence was assigned one dominant function; where a unit performed more than one function, the secondary function was also noted.

RESULTS

The analysis identified six recurrent communicative-pragmatic functions of hyponymy in the media texts of both languages. They are described below with typical examples; English examples are given with their Uzbek counterparts from comparable texts.

1. Cohesive-referential function

The most frequent function is anaphoric substitution: a proper name or specific noun introduced in the lead is later referred to by a hyperonym. This links sentences, avoids repetition and adds information about the referent.

- English: Tesla reported lower deliveries in the third quarter. The carmaker said...; A 45-year-old man was arrested... The suspect is due in court on Monday.
- Uzbek: Toshkent metropoliteni yangi bekatlarni ishga tushirdi. Mazkur transport tizimi kuniga...; Kompaniya yangi zavod qurmoqda. Ushbu loyiha doirasida...

In English the hyperonym often carries new descriptive content (the carmaker, the tech giant, the 45-year-old), a device known in journalism as elegant variation. In Uzbek the hyperonym is usually marked by the demonstratives mazkur, ushbu, bu, which signal coreference explicitly.

2. Specifying-informative function

Here the direction is reversed: a hyperonym is followed by a list of hyponyms that make the information concrete and verifiable.

- English: Prices of dairy products — milk, cheese and yoghurt — rose by...

- Uzbek: Sut mahsulotlari — sut, pishloq, qatiq narxi oshdi; Viloyatda mevalar: olma, o'rik va gilos hosili yig'ib olinmoqda.

This function satisfies the maxim of quantity: the reader receives exactly the level of detail needed to understand the scale of the event.

3. Generalizing-economizing function

Headlines and leads favour hyperonyms because they compress information and fit space limits.

- English: Vegetable prices soar ahead of winter; Transport disrupted as storm hits coast
- Uzbek: Sabzavotlar narxi oshdi; Meva-sabzavot eksporti ko'paydi

A specific feature of Uzbek is the use of paired words (juft so'zlar) such as meva-sabzavot, oziq-ovqat, kiyim-kechak, whose combined meaning functions as a collective hyperonym. English has no direct structural equivalent and uses a single generic noun (produce, food, clothing).

4. Evaluative-framing function

The level of generality chosen for an event frames the reader's interpretation. A specific hyponym foregrounds the nature of an act, while a neutral hyperonym backgrounds it.

- English: the attack / the shooting versus the incident; the strike versus the dispute
- Uzbek: portlash / yong'in versus hodisa; voqea versus noxush hodisa

The choice between an incident and a shooting is not stylistic but evaluative: the hyperonym reduces the emotional and legal weight of the event, while the hyponym intensifies it.

5. Mitigating (euphemistic) function

Abstract hyperonyms are used to avoid naming unpleasant, sensitive or not yet confirmed facts.

- English: a substance was found; the company took measures; job losses instead of dismissals

- Uzbek: tegishli choralar ko'rildi; muayyan chora-tadbirlar belgilandi; ayrim muammolar mavjud

This function is more frequent in Uzbek official media, where abstract hyperonyms such as chora-tadbir, soha, masala, holat are characteristic of the official-business style. In English it appears mainly in corporate and governmental statements quoted in news.

6. Persuasive-intensifying function

An enumeration of several hyponyms under one hyperonym creates an effect of abundance, scale or urgency, which is typical of advertising and analytical texts.

- English: Smartphones, laptops, tablets — all electronics are now 30% off
- Uzbek: Smartfonlar, noutbuklar, planshetlar — barcha elektron jihozlar chegirmada

The means of realizing the identified functions in the two languages are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Means of realizing the communicative-pragmatic functions of hyponymy in English and Uzbek media texts

Function	English means	Uzbek means
Cohesive-referential	Descriptive hyperonym after a name (<i>the carmaker, the 45-year-old</i>)	Demonstrative + hyperonym (<i>mazkur tashkilot, ushbu loyiha</i>)
Specifying-informative	Hyperonym + dash or <i>such as</i> + list	Hyperonym + dash or colon + list
Generalizing-economizing	Single generic noun in headlines	Generic noun with plural <i>-lar</i> ; paired words (<i>meva-sabzavot</i>)
Evaluative-framing	<i>incident</i> vs. <i>attack</i> , <i>dispute</i> vs. <i>strike</i>	<i>hodisa</i> vs. <i>portlash</i> , <i>voqea</i> vs. <i>noxush hodisa</i>
Mitigating (euphemistic)	<i>measures</i> , <i>a substance</i> , <i>job losses</i>	<i>chora-tadbirlar</i> , <i>muammolar</i> , <i>holat</i>
Persuasive-intensifying	Enumeration + <i>all</i> + hyperonym	Enumeration + <i>barcha</i> + hyperonym

DISCUSSION

The results confirm that in media discourse hyponymy functions not only as a systemic relation but as a pragmatic resource. The choice of a level of generality is a strategic decision through which the journalist manages the amount of information, the coherence of the text and the reader's evaluation of events. This supports Murphy's view that lexical relations are activated in use [11], and it extends Halliday and Hasan's treatment of superordinates as a purely cohesive device [7]: in the media texts examined, the same hyperonymic substitution that creates cohesion simultaneously adds information (function 1) or frames the event (function 4).

The evaluative-framing and mitigating functions are directly connected with the ideological dimension of news described by van Dijk [15] and Fairclough [5]. Selecting a hyperonym such as incident or hodisa is a form of strategic vagueness: it is not false, yet it withholds the most salient feature of the event. In Gricean terms, the writer deliberately provides less information than is available, and the reader is invited to infer that the specific nature of the event is either unknown or unimportant. Departures from Rosch's basic level [14] are therefore pragmatically meaningful: moving up (vehicle, transport vositasi) distances and neutralizes, while moving down (Toyota Camry, gilos) concretizes and authenticates.

The cross-linguistic differences are largely explained by stylistic traditions. English news style values lexical variation and compact descriptive reference, which produces chains such as Tesla – the carmaker – the Texas-based company. Uzbek media texts, particularly those close to the official style, prefer explicit coreference with mazkur and ushbu, and make wider use of abstract hyperonyms (chora-tadbir, soha, masala). This tendency increases text cohesion and formality but can reduce informativeness, a point relevant to editors who aim to bring Uzbek online media closer to international reporting standards. The paired words of Uzbek (meva-sabzavot, oziq-ovqat) represent a language-specific morphological-lexical means of expressing collective generic meaning that has no structural parallel in English.

These findings have practical implications for translation. When translating English media texts into

Uzbek, an English descriptive hyperonym (the carmaker) is often better rendered by a demonstrative construction or a generic noun (mazkur kompaniya), since a literal avtomobil ishlab chiqaruvchi may sound unnatural in an anaphoric position. Conversely, Uzbek abstract hyperonyms such as chora-tadbirlar frequently require specification in English (steps, measures to curb inflation) to meet the informativeness expected by English-speaking readers.

The study has limitations. The corpus covers online media of a limited period and four thematic areas, and the classification relies on assigning a dominant function, which involves interpretive judgment. Future research could quantify the distribution of functions across genres, include television and social media texts, and test reader perception of hyperonymic versus hyponymic framing experimentally.

CONCLUSION

Hyponymy in English and Uzbek media texts performs six communicative-pragmatic functions: cohesive-referential, specifying-informative, generalizing-economizing, evaluative-framing, mitigating and persuasive-intensifying. The choice between a hyperonym and a hyponym is a pragmatic decision that regulates the amount of information, ensures text coherence and shapes the reader's evaluation of events.

The set of functions is common to both languages, which reflects shared principles of news production. The means of realization differ: English relies on descriptive hyperonymic substitution and lexical variation, while Uzbek relies on demonstrative-plus-hyperonym constructions, paired words with collective generic meaning and abstract hyperonyms of the official style.

The results can be applied in comparative lexicology, media linguistics, the training of journalists and translators, and in teaching English and Uzbek for specific purposes. Further research should focus on the quantitative distribution of the functions across media genres and platforms.

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