

TONGUES TIED BY A SUFFIX

R. Schusler ¹, O. Sattorov ²

Abstract:

This article explores the linguistic bridge between Uzbek and English through the shared use of the suffix "-ing" and the continuous aspect. Despite vast grammatical differences, Uzbek and English both employ "-ing" to indicate progressive actions, a connection not found in the two major European languages that shaped English—German and French (Comrie, 1976, p. 48). This intercultural approach enhances Uzbek students' understanding of English grammar by linking familiar structures with new ones, fostering a critical, comparative perspective on language. Through this exploration, students develop an appreciation for linguistic similarities and contrasts, promoting deeper mastery of English and reinforcing concepts in their native tongue.

Key words: English-Uzbek language comparison, -ing suffix, continuous aspect, linguistic bridge, cross-linguistic analysis, intercultural learning.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.2024/5zfwsy47>

In language education, finding commonalities between a student's native language and the target language can accelerate learning and improve comprehension [Crystal, 2003, p. 112]. English and Uzbek share two notable linguistic features—the continuous aspect and the "-ing" suffix—that provide a unique foundation for teaching English grammar to Uzbek speakers. Though English originated as a blend of Germanic and Romance influences, neither German nor French possesses a continuous aspect or "-ing" suffix with the same prominence as do English and Uzbek. By examining these parallels, we can leverage the "-ing" suffix to foster a deeper grammatical understanding in both languages.

1. The Use of "-ing" in Uzbek: Functions and Implications. In Uzbek, the suffix "-ing" serves several roles that are instrumental in Uzbek and useful in awakening students to grammatical aspects of both languages. Notably, "-ing" in Uzbek appears in imperative and possessive forms.

- **Imperative Voice:** The suffix "-ing" is essential in formal or plural imperatives. For example, when a teacher instructs a group to open their notebooks, they would say "Daftarlarni ochinglar!" Here, "-ing" conveys politeness or formality, while "-lar" marks plurality. Uzbek's agglutinative structure allows suffixes to attach to various grammatical elements, such as objects and verbs, providing a parallel to English nominal possessive constructions [Mathews, 2007, p. 178].

- **Possessive Adjectives:** The suffix "-ing" in Uzbek also serves to indicate possessive relationships. For example, "Mening do'stim Samarkandda yashaydi" (My friend lives in Samarkand) and "Uning uyi juda katta" (His house is very big) demonstrate the suffix's role in forming possessive adjectives. When applied to a person's name, as in "Akramning dugona" (Akram's friend), the possessive function of "-ing" closely resembles English's nominal possessive, providing a familiar entry point to English possessive forms.

2. The "-ing" Suffix in English: Functions Among Parts of Speech

¹ Ralph Schusler, USA

² Ozod Sattorov, Uzbekistan

In English, the "-ing" suffix operates within three main grammatical contexts, each conveying a different function [Comrie, 1976, p. 53].

- **Present Participle and Continuous Aspect:** The present participle form is used in combination with the verb "to be" to create the continuous aspect, as in "The teacher is speaking to the students." This shared continuous aspect provides a bridge for Uzbek learners, who use the auxiliary "yap" to indicate ongoing action. In Uzbek, this structure serves a similar function, offering students a familiar frame of reference from which to launch their foray into the foreign tongue. This mutual aspect is particularly beneficial in a learning environment, enabling students to link novel English grammar concepts to well-known structures in Uzbek [Crystal, 2003, p. 185].

- **Gerund (Verbal Noun):** In English, "-ing" can also transform verbs into nouns, known as gerunds, which function as subjects, objects or complements within a sentence. For example, in "Reading improves language skills," the gerund serves as the subject, while in "I love reading," it is the direct object. This aligns with Uzbek nominalization, in which modified verbs can also serve as nouns, making it easier for students to grasp English gerunds.

- **Present Participle as an Adjective (Active Participle):** English also employs "-ing" in the active participle, largely to describe nouns performing actions, as in "We watched an entertaining movie." Here, "entertaining" functions as an adjective, describing the noun providing the entertainment. This usage can be contrasted with the passive participle (using the past participle form), wherein the adjective describes a noun that receives (or received) the action, such as "a broken window." This distinction between active and passive participles is crucial for Uzbek students, as it invites discussion on voice, actions, description, and verb types (transitive or intransitive) [Mathews, 2007, p. 245].

- **Continuous Aspect**

- o Uzbek: U kitob o'qiyapti.

- o English: He is reading a book.

- o **Explanation:** In both languages, the continuous aspect conveys ongoing action. The Uzbek verb ending "-yapti" mirrors English's "-ing," providing Uzbek students with a familiar foundation upon which to build their understanding of the continuous aspect of all English tenses.

- 2. **Gerunds and Verbal Nouns**

- o Uzbek: O'qish foydali.

- o English: Studying is beneficial."

- o **Explanation:** Both languages allow verbs to function as nouns. This grammatical feature facilitates understanding of gerunds, as students are already familiar with verbal nouns in Uzbek.

- 3,

- o To be consistent, we should have a breakdown, similar to the two preceding, of active participles, or their equivalent, in Uzbek.

Cross-Linguistic Observations: German and French Comparison. Unlike Uzbek and English, German and French lack an independent continuous aspect. While French may use prepositional phrases (e.g., "en train de") to convey progressive action, and certain German dialects achieve similar effects, neither language possesses a true continuous aspect. Additionally, "-ing" is absent in both languages, making it a unique point of connection between English and Uzbek [Crystal, 2003, p. 202]. Understanding this feature helps students appreciate the grammatical diversity among languages and highlights the uniqueness of their own language in a global context.

Conclusion. Emphasizing the "-ing" suffix and continuous aspect as common ground between Uzbek and English provides a valuable teaching strategy for language instructors. By encouraging students to reflect on these linguistic features in their native tongue, educators foster a deeper understanding of English grammar while building on familiar

concepts. This cross-linguistic approach not only bridges cultural gaps but also promotes a critical, comparative perspective that enhances students' linguistic awareness and analytical skills.

References:

- [1]. Crystal, D. (2003). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 112, 185, 202.
- [2]. Comrie, B. (1976). *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 48, 53.
- [3]. Mathews, P. H. (2007). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics*. Oxford University Press, pp. 178, 245.
- [4]. Uzbek National Encyclopedia. (2020).