

**SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN ALTAIC
LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK, KOREAN, AND JAPANESE*****Turakhanov Rustam Baxramovich****assistant teacher of University Economics and Pedagogy**Samarkand Campus Departments of Pedagogy and Social Sciences*

Abstract. This article explores the syntactic parallels and divergences among three prominent Altaic languages: Uzbek, Korean, and Japanese. Drawing on historical linguistics and structural typology, the study examines sentence order, subject-verb agreement, particle use, and honorific constructions. While the three languages share SOV (subject-object-verb) structure and agglutinative morphology, their grammar systems also display distinct features shaped by geography, contact, and cultural evolution. This comparative approach contributes to understanding how typologically similar languages evolved under different sociolinguistic conditions. This study provides a comprehensive syntactic comparison of three languages historically associated with the Altaic family: Uzbek (Turkic branch), Korean (isolate with Altaic features), and Japanese (Japonic with Altaic influences). Through contrastive analysis of sentence structure, morphological typology, and grammatical particles, the research identifies both shared features (SOV word order, agglutination) and divergent patterns (case marking, honorific systems). The findings challenge traditional Altaic classifications while revealing meaningful syntactic parallels that facilitate interlinguistic comprehension. Data is drawn from native speaker interviews, corpus analysis, and historical texts.

Keywords: Altaic languages, Uzbek, Korean, Japanese, syntax, sentence structure, agglutination, SOV order, language typology, Altaic languages, comparative syntax, Uzbek grammar, Korean sentence structure, Japanese linguistics, agglutinative languages.

The classification of the Altaic language family has been debated in linguistic scholarship, yet the syntactic commonalities among Turkic, Koreanic, and Japonic languages are undeniable. Uzbek, Korean, and Japanese exhibit notable parallels in sentence structure, particularly in their subject-object-verb (SOV) order, agglutinative morphology, and postpositional particles. However, deeper syntactic layers reveal important distinctions resulting from historical isolation, influence from neighboring language families, and independent grammatical evolution. This article provides a comparative analysis of these three languages to better understand their typological similarities and functional divergences.

The Altaic Hypothesis Revisited

The contested Altaic language family—traditionally comprising Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Koreanic, and Japonic languages—remains a subject of debate [Georg et al., 1999: 15]. This study examines core syntactic features across three representative languages:

Language	Classification	Speakers	Script
Uzbek	Turkic	36M	Latin/Cyrillic
Korean	Koreanic (isolate)	82M	Hangul
Japanese	Japonic	125M	Kanji+Kana

Recent phylogenetic studies suggest only 28% of proposed Altaic cognates are verifiable [Robbeets, 2020: 112], making syntactic comparison particularly valuable.

Word Order and Basic Sentence Structure

All three languages follow the SOV sentence structure:

Uzbek: Men kitob o‘qiyman ("I read a book")

Korean: 나는 책을 읽는다 (Na-neun chaek-eul ilneunda)

Japanese: 私は本を読む (Watashi wa hon o yomu)

This syntactic parallelism suggests a common typological foundation. However, variation exists in the use of particles and the flexibility of word order. Korean and Japanese are highly reliant on particles to indicate grammatical roles, whereas Uzbek uses case suffixes more rigidly [Fisher 2003, p. 84].

Core Structural Similarities

1.1. Word Order Typology

All three languages exhibit rigid SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) structure:

Uzbek: Men kitob o‘qidim (I book read) [Boeschoten, 1998: 45]

Korean: 나는 책을 읽었다 (Na-neun chaek-eul ilg-eotda) [Sohn, 1999: 89]

Japanese: 私は本を読んだ (Watashi wa hon o yonda) [Kuno, 1973: 33]

Exception: Japanese allows limited OSV in topicalization [Hinds, 1986: 77].

1.2. Agglutinative Morphology

Uzbek: o‘qi-gan-man (read-PAST-1SG)

Korean: 읽-었-습니다 (ilk-eoss-seubnida) (read-PAST-FORMAL)

Japanese: 読ん-で-い-ます (yon-de-i-masu) (read-CONT-PROG-POLITE)

Commonality: Suffix stacking with clear morpheme boundaries [Comrie, 1981: 134].

2. Key Divergences

2.1. Case Marking Systems

Feature	Uzbek	Korean	Japanese
Nominative	-∅ (null)	-가/-이	-は/-が
Accusative	-ni	-을/-를	-を
Dative	-ga	-에게/-한테	-に

Korean shows dual case markers depending on consonant endings [Lee, 2003: 56], while Japanese employs topic marker wa alongside grammatical cases [Shibatani, 1990: 112].

2.2. Honorifics Implementation

Uzbek: Limited lexical substitutions (e.g., siz vs sen)

Korean: 7-tier verb conjugation system [Brown, 2015: 201]

Japanese: Special honorific verbs (kudasaru vs morau)

2.3. Negation Strategies

Uzbek: Pre-verbal emas (Men boraman → Men bor emasman)

Korean: Post-verbal -ji anh- (갑니다 → 가지 않습니다)

Japanese: Final -nai (行きます → 行きません)

Morphological Agglutination

All three languages are agglutinative, meaning grammatical functions are expressed through affixation. In Uzbek:

O'qituvchimizsizmi? ("Are you our teacher?") shows plural + possessive + question marker.

In Korean and Japanese, a similar stacking of grammatical morphemes occurs:

Korean: 학교에 갑니다 (Hakgyoe gamnida – "I go to school")
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Japanese: 学校に行きます (Gakkō ni ikimasu)

Despite structural similarities, Japanese exhibits more fusion in polite forms, while Uzbek maintains clearer morphological separation [Vovin 2005, p. 213].

Psycholinguistic Evidence

fMRI studies show Uzbek and Korean speakers process SOV sentences similarly (Broca's area activation at 0.78 correlation) [Oh et al., 2021: 12], while Japanese speakers exhibit unique right-hemisphere engagement due to kanji processing.

Use of Particles and Case Marking

Japanese and Korean use particles to indicate grammatical roles:

Korean: -ga, -eul, -eseo

Japanese: -wa, -ga, -o, -ni

Uzbek, however, relies on suffix-based case markers:
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kitob-ni (accusative), o'qituvchi-ga (dative)

This reflects a divergence in grammatical strategies: Korean and Japanese encode syntax through particles, while Uzbek uses inflectional morphology [Janhunen 1996, p. 72].

Politeness and Sentence-Endings

Korean and Japanese feature highly developed systems of honorifics and sentence-final particles:

Korean: 합니다, 해요, 하세요

Japanese: します, している, なさいます

Uzbek, though it does mark formality (e.g., siz, janob), lacks the sentence-final variation and honorific complexity found in East Asian counterparts. This reflects differing social-linguistic traditions [Ramstedt 1957, p. 149].

Negation and Question Formation

All three languages form questions and negatives via suffixes:

Uzbek: Men bormayman ("I do not go"), Borasizmi? ("Do you go?")

Korean: 가지 않습니다, 가요?

Japanese: 行きません, 行きますか

However, auxiliary use and intonation patterns differ slightly, with Korean and Japanese relying more on verb conjugation and auxiliary verbs than Uzbek does [Poppe 1965, p. 89].

Conclusion

Implications for Altaic Theory

While the three languages share:

1. SOV dominance
2. Agglutination
3. Postpositional syntax

Their differences in:

1. Case marking regularity
2. Honorific complexity
3. Negation placement

Suggest contact-based convergence rather than genetic inheritance [Janhunen, 1996: 189]. This supports modern views of the Altaic hypothesis as a Sprachbund rather than a language family.

While Uzbek, Korean, and Japanese share syntactic features such as SOV order and agglutinative morphology, their structural developments have diverged significantly. The differences in particle use, formality levels, and case marking reflect the influence of region-specific factors. These languages offer a compelling case study in parallel linguistic evolution, shaped by both shared heritage and distinct sociocultural contexts.

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