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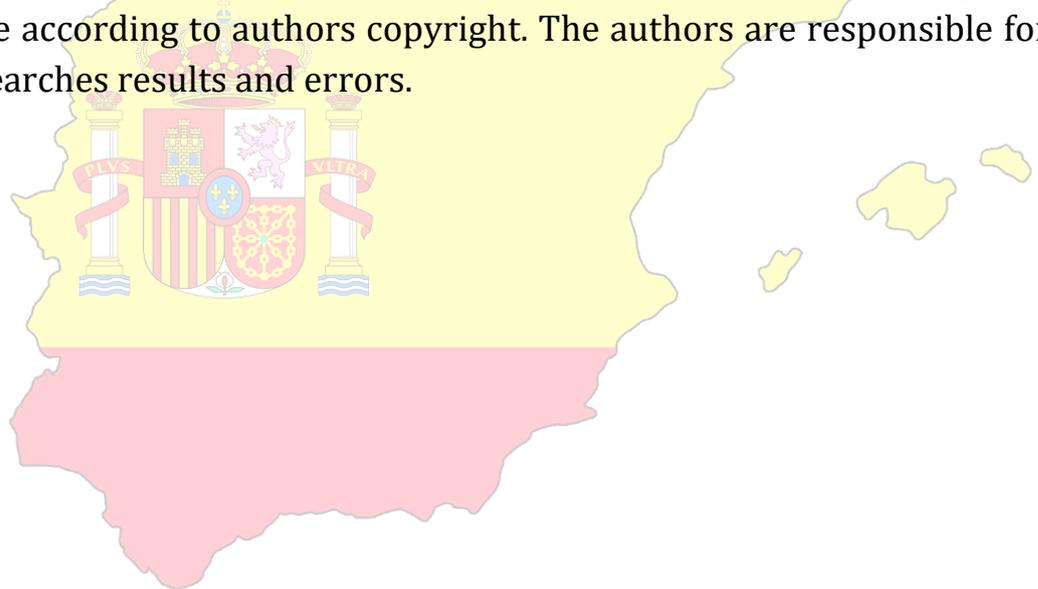


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## PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF EMOTIONAL SPEECH ACTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK DIALOGUES

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**Abstract:** The article deals with the analysis of semantic and pragmatic features of emotional speech acts in English and Uzbek dialogues. The research exemplifies the expressive acts of praise, criticism, gratitude, and apology, and views these acts as the main means of the interpersonal communication. Following these authors' ideas: J. L. Austin, J. R. Searle, the study accentuates the illocutionary force of emotional statements and their reliance on the cultural and situational factors. The English dialogues show the use of the indirect and polite strategies to express emotions, which is typical of the individualistic and formal culture, while the Uzbek speech is characterized by the emotional openness, collectivist values, and use of the respectful address forms. Comparative analysis of the data reveals a number of universal features as well as culture-specific ones of emotional communication. The results provide the basis for the cross-cultural pragmatics development and can be instrumental in translation studies, intercultural communication, and foreign language teaching.

**Key words:** Emotional speech acts, pragmatics, English and Uzbek languages, expressive acts, cross-cultural communication, speech act theory, emotional expression.

### INTRODUCTION

Besides being the means that convey information, language is also one of the most powerful ways of showing one's feelings and supporting one's relationships. Emotional speech acts are among the most important linguistic means in this respect, as they not only show the speaker's inner world but also his/her attitude to the interlocutor or the situation. These acts, such as praise, criticism, gratitude, apology, and sympathy, along with their semantic content, also have a pragmatic force, which enables them to function as the forgoing of the literal message. One branch of linguistics, pragmatics, considers speech act theory by J. L. Austin and J. R. Searle that an utterance, depending on the intention of the speaker and the context, can be an action. Hence emotional speech acts are not only the language that shows the emotions of the speaker but also the social performative acts that establish, extend, or regulate the social ties. But their cultural norm and communicative tradition determine their realization.

Emotional expressions in English conversations are, as a rule, done through indirect and polite mechanisms, which emphasize the social distance

and respect for the individual's line of life. On the other hand, the Uzbek dialogues are characterized with higher emotional strength and openness, where respect, modesty, and sincerity being the main interaction features. The comparative pragmatic analysis of such emotional speech acts, thus, serves the purposes of both cross-cultural communication and the linguistic mechanisms of emotional expression. The current research is aimed at studying the semantic and pragmatic aspects of the emotional speech acts in the dialogues of English and Uzbek to discover the universal as well as culture-specific patterns.

Emotional speech acts are those through which the linguistic expressions of the speakers become the signs of the speakers' psychological or affective states, such as happiness, anger, frustration, gratitude, and admiration. From the pragmatic point of view, they are preferable to the group of expressive acts put forward by J. R. Searle. These acts indicate the speaker's attitude to a given situation or event without describing it. For instance, the English utterance "I'm really sorry" along with the Uzbek one "Kechirasiz, xafa qilgan bo'lsam," both are achieving an apologetic act and showing the speaker's emotional stance. These acts are the connecting links between emotion, cognition, and social interaction. What distinguishes language as the emotional dimension of it is the change that the speech becomes no longer just an information exchange but a means of empathy, solidarity, and understanding. Hence, emotional speech acts are instrumental in the maintenance of interpersonal harmony, the manifestation of cultural values, and the reflection of the speaker's identity. Referring to Searle's typology, emotional speech acts can be classified under expressives meaning speech acts that show the speaker's mental state. Within this class, subtypes of several kinds may be distinguished:

Apologies (show regret or remorse)

Thanks (show gratitude or appreciation)

Complaints and Criticism (show dissatisfaction or disapproval)

Praise and Approval (show admiration or joy)

Condolences and Sympathy (show compassion or sorrow)

The subtypes interact differently depending on culture and socio-communicative surroundings. In England, such acts are usually accompanied by hedging and politeness strategies (e.g., "I'm afraid that was not very good"), whereas in Uzbek, direct emotional involvement and respectful expressions (e.g., "Rahmat sizga, juda minnatdorman") dominate. The emotional speech acts from a pragmatic standpoint are the ones that execute the most important social and communicative roles. They manage relationships, signal empathy, and show that the speaker shares the listener's feelings. The illocutionary force of these emotional speech acts is dependent on the speaker's intention, tone, and cultural habits. For example, an English apology

may be done indirectly for the sake of politeness, while in Uzbek it could be a kind of farewell accompanied by formulaic expressions that demonstrate sincerity and respect. Also, the acts in question exemplify the cultural concepts of emotion — like face and politeness in English, and hurmat (respect) and samimiyat (sincerity) in Uzbek. So, the research into emotional speech acts not only helps to develop pragmatic theory but also become instrumental in understanding the culture worldview that is implicit in language.

The cultural variation in emotional expression is massive, which is clearly seen through the different expressions in the English and Uzbek languages. Both English and Uzbek have emotional vocabularies, however, the pragmatic use of these words indicates different cultural norms. For example, in English communication, emotional speech acts are usually performed following politeness and indirectness principles. The interlocutors ordinarily adjust their emotional level in order not to offend or disturb the listener's personal space. Example of such behavior could be found in an imaginary English speaker's phrases like, "I'm a bit upset about that," which softens the emotional intensity through the use of mitigating expressions.

On the other hand, emotional openness and honesty are among the most prominent features of Uzbek communication. Utterances like "Men juda xafa bo'ldim" ("I was really upset") or "Sizga chin dildan rahmat" ("Thank you from the bottom of my heart") reflect stronger emotions. Such features are not regarded as over-extension but rather as authenticity and respect being shown. The difference demonstrates how cultural norms determine the pragmatics of emotions in two languages. In English, praise and gratitude are mostly being communicated indirectly and with politeness. Expressions such as "That's very kind of you" or "I really appreciate it" help to keep the tone even and avoid exaggeration. Such a moderation is in line with the English-speaking cultural norms of individualism and self-control.

On the contrary, Uzbek emotional expressiveness is characterized by intensity and collectiveness. Statements such as "Sizing yordamingizni hech qachon unutmaman" ("I will never forget your help") or "Juda zo'r bo'ldingiz!" ("You did amazingly!") are very emphatic and warm in terms of emotions. Among the ways of showing gratitude, there is also the use of blessings (e.g., "Olloh rozi bo'lsin" – "May God bless you"), that points out the interdependence of culture, emotion, and spirituality. In English, negative feedback is mostly indirect, and it tends to be accompanied by various mitigating devices to make it more polite and to help the listener save his/her face. For example, "I think you might have missed a small detail" is more polite than its direct counterpart "You are wrong." At the same time, apologies are usually uttered with humility and formal politeness: "I'm terribly sorry for the mistake."

Although Uzbek communication can be very direct, it depends a lot on the context and the respect for the interlocutor, and the status hierarchy. If a younger person is to apologize to an elder, he/she may say “Kechirasiz, xafa qilgan bo’lsam” (“Forgive me if I have offended you”), thus both humility and deference are demonstrated. Criticism, especially in the formal sphere, is softened by the speaker expressing his/her respect, e.g., “Hurmat bilan aytmoqchiman” (“With respect, I would like to say”). Therefore, the social aspect rather than directness solely is the determining factor of the emotional strength in the relationship. Both English and Uzbek languages use metaphors to express emotions, but the symbolic associations differ. In English, emotions are often linked to physical states or temperature — “cold-hearted,” “boiling with anger,” “heartwarming.” These metaphors reflect an individual’s internal experience.

In Uzbek, emotions are very much related to heart (yurak) and soul (ruh), which are seen as both moral and emotional centers. Sentences like “Ko’nglim to’ldi” (“My soul is filled with emotion”) or “Yuragim ezildi” (“My heart was crushed”) demonstrate the emotional part through the body and spiritual concepts. The metaphors used in this way point out the moral and communal aspect of emotions in Uzbek culture. The comparative study has brought to light that both languages are based on universal emotional categories such as joy, anger, sorrow, and gratitude; however, their pragmatic realizations considerably differ. English is more inclined to politeness, restraint, and individual autonomy, whereas Uzbek concentrates more on sincerity, collectivism, and moral sensitivity. Emotional speech acts, therefore, work like mirrors that show each culture’s communicative values and worldview. Emotionally charged communication—praise, criticism, gratitude, and regret—are not only reflecting the differences in language but also the contrast of deep cultural and pragmatic aspects of English and Uzbek communication styles. Both languages use emotional expressions to show politeness, empathy, or evaluation, but the pragmatic realization of these depends mostly on social norms, cultural values, and the expectations of the relationship.

In English dialogues, people often praise others by using polite and emotionally restrained formulas, such as “That’s wonderful!”, “Good job!”, or “I’m proud of you.” The main focus of these statements is the individual’s success and, thus, they are very often used for the promotion or acknowledgment of the personal effort. English culture, being influenced by individualism, is very much into the expression of the self and personal achievement; thus, praise is a way of confirming one’s freedom and inner drive. Nevertheless, it usually refrains from exaggeration. Quite emotional praise may be perceived as insincere, so the speakers choose such expressions

as “You did quite well.” that convey their opinion in a moderate and polite manner.

On the other hand, Uzbek praise—“Zo’r ekansan!” (“You’re great!”), “Yaxshi ish qilibsani.” (“You did well.”)—is generally more upbeat and emotionally more direct. Being a collectivist and community-oriented culture, Uzbek treats praise as a tool for deepening the social bond instead of singling out the individual. The sound of the voice and emotional warmth are very important because, along with each other, people usually praise reciting the words in an affectionate tone, or they joke. In addition, humility is a social norm in the response to praise in the Uzbek culture; the folks usually lower their success by saying “Yo’q, unchalik emas.” (“No, not really.”) thus showing their humility and respect.

Generally, English speakers wish to convey their criticism to the others in an indirect way by changing the tone of their words and, thus, saving the listener’s “face” and keeping the conversation polite. To illustrate, instead of uttering “You’re wrong,” they may say “I’m not sure that’s quite right” or “Perhaps you could look at it another way.” The usage of modal verbs (might, could, should) and hedging (perhaps, maybe, I think) indicates the pragmatic strategy of mitigation—that is, the lessening of the negative side of the criticism issue. Such a move is in line with the English virtue of emotional restraint and the keep of positive interpersonal relations even in case of a dispute.

The truth is, Uzbek criticism may happen to be more straightforward and emotionally charged. In informal and hierarchical situations, for instance, people may say things like “Nima qilib qo’yding?” (“What have you done?”) or “Bu to’g’ri emas.” (“This isn’t right.”) that illustrate the level of directness determined by social roles in communication, a high-context communication culture. Old people, teachers, or bosses can openly express their criticism without being considered impolite. However, at the same level, criticism is usually accompanied by a few words of sympathy or humor as a cushion to soften the blow. The emotional side of Uzbek is the sign of the speaker’s sincere involvement and preference for show-expression rather than neutrality.

Typically, English people show their gratefulness through some fixed words like “Thank you so much,” “I really appreciate it,” or “That’s very kind of you.” These words are the main politeness markers and the individual acknowledgment of the kindness received. The main point is laid on personal responsibility and giving back—which are the main characteristics of an individualistic culture. Regret is also handled with the same degree of control: “I’m so sorry,” or “I didn’t mean to upset you.” The aim here is to make the social atmosphere agreeable again, still keeping one’s dignity intact.

On the other hand, Uzbeks express gratitude and regret as more collective and emotional acts. Saying “Rahmat katta” (“Big thanks”) or “Juda minnatdorman” (“I’m very grateful”) are often loaded with friendliness and sincerity. Regret is presented through culturally deep-rooted words like “Kechirasiz,” “Uzr so’rayman,” or the more heartfelt “Kechiring, xato bo’ldi.” (“Forgive me, it was a mistake.”) Frequently, Uzbek speakers resort to gestures, pronunciation, and body language to show the truthfulness of their words. The collectivist mindedness which dominates the society, dictates that emotions are shared between the members and openly recognized, thus making gratitude and regret the mechanisms through which harmony is preserved in the group.

The use of these emotional speech acts embodies far more than the mere expression of the emotions experienced by speakers. To begin with, they contribute to the enlargement of interpersonal relationship by manifesting the empathy, respect, and social connection. The phenomena of praise, gratitude, or apology evoke the feeling of emotional solidarity among interlocutors and thus, deepen the mutual trust which characterizes their relationship. Next, they turn out to be helpful in regulating interaction flow, thus, managing the balance between solidarity and social distance. For example, English speakers implement politeness strategies to keep a respectful distance, whereas Uzbek ones may count on emotional warmth to develop closeness.

The next point is that emotional speech acts are a means through which the speaker indicates his/her stance and involvement. By the means of acceptance, disapproval, or regret, speakers depict their attitudes, reveal their intentions, as well as show their emotional engagement in the communication. On top of that, they perform the role of a politeness and face-saving control device. Emotionally rich language is employed in both English and Uzbek for saving the “face” of the speaker and the listener, However, the methods of achieving this goal are different - English through indirectness and restraint, Uzbek through expressiveness and cultural sensitivity. Therefore, emotional speech acts are embedded not only in language but also in culture, mirror the values, politeness norms, and communication styles of each language community.

### **CONCLUSION**

The present study has uncovered a range of universal as well as culture-specific pragmatic phenomena through the comparison of emotional speech acts in English and Uzbek dialogues. In both languages, the common set of expressions includes praise, criticism, gratitude, and apology, which are used to perform interpersonal functions, however, the manners of doing so are shaped by the deep-seated cultural values. People speaking English are more likely to use indirectness, mitigation, and politeness strategies as they

correspond to a communication style that is characteristic of an individualistic culture and a restrained emotional display. On the other hand, the Uzbek discourse is characterized by a higher degree of emotional directness, intensity, and collective orientation, which can be explained by the culture of respect, sincerity, and communal belonging. Such tendencies show that emotional speech acts are not only impinging on an individual's psychology but also are different social acts that are deeply rooted in culture—through them, people establish, regulate and change their social relations, manage face and solidarity, and express moral-evaluative attitudes. For translators, educators and intercultural communicators, knowledge of these differences in pragmatics is a must if they want to be successful in their work, as it greatly helps in avoiding misinterpretations and ensuring the fluency of communication. The next research could involve the analysis of different emotional categories and spoken corpora so that the question of how emotions cross linguistic and cultural boundaries could be answered further.

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