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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACT REALIZATION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK COMPLAINT EXPRESSIONS

Abstract. The article compares how English and Uzbek speakers express their complaints through different speech act patterns. The research results expand knowledge about pragmatic transfer phenomena while providing benefits to both intercultural communication and foreign language teaching. The theoretical framework combines essential speech act theories from Austin and Searle with modern cross-cultural pragmatic methods to show how different cultures approach complaint handling.

Keywords: speech acts, complaint expressions, cross-cultural pragmatics, English, Uzbek, directness, mitigation strategies, pragmatic competence

Аннотация. В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ моделей реализации речевых актов в выражениях жалобы на английском и узбекском языках. Полученные результаты способствуют более широкому пониманию феномена прагматического переноса и имеют практическое значение для межкультурной коммуникации и методики преподавания иностранных языков. Теоретическая база объединяет основополагающие концепции речевых актов Остина и Серля с современными кросс-культурными прагматическими подходами, раскрывая культурно обусловленный характер реализации жалобы.

Ключевые слова: речевые акты, выражения жалобы, кросс-культурная прагматика, английский язык, узбекский язык, прямота, стратегии смягчения, прагматическая компетенция.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o‘zbek tillarida shikoyat ifodalarida nutq aktlarining amalga oshirilish modellari qiyosiy tahlil qilingan. Olingan natijalar pragmatik transfer hodisasini kengroq anglashga hissa qo‘shadi hamda madaniyatlararo muloqot va chet tillarni o‘qitish metodikasi uchun amaliy ahamiyatga ega. Nazariy asos Ostin va Serlning nutq aktlari bo‘yicha fundamental konsepsiyalarini zamonaviy kross-madaniy pragmatik yondashuvlar bilan integratsiyalash orqali shikoyat ifodalanishining madaniy jihatdan belgilangan xususiyatini yoritadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: nutq aktlari, shikoyat ifodalari, kross-madaniy pragmatika, ingliz tili, o‘zbek tili, to‘g‘ridan-to‘g‘rilik, yumshatish strategiyalari, pragmatik kompetensiya.

INTRODUCTION

The study of speech acts constitutes one of the most productive areas within pragmatic linguistics, offering insights into how language users accomplish social actions through their

verbal communications. Among the diverse repertoire of speech acts, complaints represent a particularly face-threatening category that requires careful linguistic negotiation across all cultures [1]. Complaints function as statements which show discontent towards the addressee who the speaker considers responsible for an offensive act, requiring speakers to possess advanced pragmatic skills because they need to maintain their social connections while achieving their communication objectives [2]. The comparative examination of complaint realization in English and Uzbek presents a compelling research opportunity given the substantial typological, cultural, and sociopragmatic differences between these languages. English, as a Germanic language with global lingua franca status, has been extensively documented in speech act research, whereas Uzbek, a Turkic language spoken predominantly in Central Asia, remains underrepresented in cross-cultural pragmatic investigations [3]. The existing situation presents a major research gap because different languages show distinct ways of handling complaints.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundations for analyzing complaint speech acts derive primarily from Austin's seminal work on performative utterances and Searle's subsequent systematization of illocutionary acts into taxonomic categories [4]. Searle classifies complaints as expressive speech acts which he defines as methods for speakers to display their emotional responses about specific situations. Complaints include directive components because speakers use them to demand that their listeners take corrective actions thus showing how speech acts combine different functions in real conversations [1]. Cross-cultural pragmatic research has consistently demonstrated that speech act realization patterns vary significantly across linguistic communities which show different cultural values and social structures and politeness orientations [5]. Trosborg's influential framework for analyzing complaint strategies identified a continuum which starts with indirect hints and ends with explicit accusations while its middle ground includes expressions of annoyance and ill consequences and direct complaints and modified blame [2]. The framework has been used in various cross-linguistic studies which demonstrated that different cultures prefer distinct strategic approaches.

The research on Central Asian languages which includes the work of Uzbek scholars through the efforts of Safarov has started to reveal the practical language systems used in Turkic languages which display unique characteristics that define their systems of honorific speech and their indirect communication methods and their need to preserve social harmony during all interactions [6]. Yuldashev studied Uzbek communication rules to demonstrate how traditional cultural values which link respect for social hierarchies with shared face protection measures determine how people use face-threatening speech acts in their interactions [7]. Russian linguistic research has established new methodologies to study speech etiquette through the work of Formanovskaya and other scholars which researchers can use to compare different linguistic systems from post-Soviet territories [8].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research implements a qualitative comparative method that uses pragmatic discourse analysis as its foundation. The research design focuses exclusively on literature-based analysis and theoretical examination rather than empirical data collection through experiments or fieldwork. The analytical framework combines Trosborg's complaint strategy taxonomy with Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to develop a complete interpretive framework which researchers can use to compare different methods of expressing complaints. Primary sources include published linguistic descriptions of complaint behavior in English and Uzbek, academic studies examining pragmatic features of both languages, and theoretical works addressing cross-cultural variation in speech act performance.

The comparative analysis proceeds through systematic examination of complaint strategy inventories available in each language, assessment of preferred directness levels based on documented cultural norms, evaluation of mitigation and aggravation devices characteristically employed by speakers, and consideration of contextual variables including social distance, power differential, and severity of offense. The interpretive approach acknowledges the inherent limitations of literature-based comparison while recognizing its value for generating theoretical insights and hypotheses regarding cross-linguistic pragmatic variation [9].

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The comparative analysis reveals substantial differences in complaint expression patterns between English and Uzbek speakers, reflecting underlying divergences in cultural communication norms and politeness orientations. English complaint strategies demonstrate considerable flexibility across the directness continuum, with speakers selecting from a broad repertoire ranging from off-record hints to baldly stated accusations depending on situational parameters [2]. Contemporary English pragmatic norms, particularly in American and British varieties, generally permit relatively direct complaint expression in contexts where the speaker possesses legitimate grievance and appropriate social standing, though mitigation through hedging, modal verbs, and interrogative formulations remains common for maintaining interpersonal relationships [1]. Uzbek complaint expression, by contrast, appears characterized by stronger preferences for indirectness and elaborate mitigation, consistent with cultural values emphasizing social harmony, hierarchical respect, and collective face preservation [7].

The Uzbek linguistic system provides extensive resources for indirect complaint formulation, including elaborate honorific systems, numerous softening particles, and conventional expressions that signal dissatisfaction without explicit accusation [6]. Analysis of documented complaint situations suggests that Uzbek speakers characteristically employ higher frequencies of preparatory moves, apologies accompanying complaints, and appeals to shared values or relationships that frame complaints as reluctant necessities rather than aggressive confrontations [3]. The influence of age, social status, and kinship relationships appears more determinative in Uzbek complaint strategy selection than in English, where individual rights discourse provides greater legitimacy for direct complaint expression regardless of social positioning [10]. Both languages demonstrate sensitivity to the severity of the complained-about offense, with more direct strategies reserved for serious violations, though the threshold for directness appears higher in Uzbek communicative norms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This comparative analysis demonstrates that complaint speech act realization in English and Uzbek reflects culturally embedded pragmatic systems that differ significantly in directness preferences, mitigation conventions, and sensitivity to social variables. While both languages provide speakers with complaint strategy repertoires spanning the directness continuum, Uzbek communicative norms appear to favor more indirect, heavily mitigated complaint expressions, particularly in contexts involving status differentials or relationship preservation concerns. These findings carry important implications for intercultural communication between English and Uzbek speakers, as pragmatic transfer from either language system may result in perceived impoliteness or communicative ineffectiveness. Language educators should incorporate explicit pragmatic instruction addressing complaint strategy variation to develop learners' sociopragmatic competence. Future research should pursue empirical verification of these literature-derived patterns through systematic data collection while expanding comparative frameworks to encompass additional speech act categories and Central Asian languages.

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