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PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF COMPLIMENT SPEECH ACTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK SOCIETIES

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Annotation: This article is devoted to the study of compliment speech acts and their pragmatic functions in English and Uzbek societies. Compliments are analyzed as an important type of expressive speech acts that play a significant role in interpersonal communication, politeness strategies, and social interaction. The article examines the linguistic and pragmatic nature of compliments, their communicative purposes, and their sociocultural characteristics in both English and Uzbek communication.Special attention is paid to the comparative analysis of compliment speech acts in the two cultures. The research identifies similarities and differences in the forms, meanings, and responses to compliments. English compliments are mainly characterized by directness, brevity, and conversational function, while Uzbek compliments are more emotional, culturally expressive, and closely connected with traditional etiquette and modesty.The article also discusses the role of compliments in maintaining positive relationships, reducing social distance, encouraging individuals, and expressing respect. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of pragmatic competence and intercultural understanding in the interpretation and translation of compliment speech acts. The findings of the research contribute to the fields of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, and discourse analysis.

Key Words: Pragmatics, speech act, compliment, communication, politeness, sociolinguistics, culture, discourse, English society, Uzbek society.

Introduction

Language is one of the most important means of human communication. People use language not only to exchange information but also to express emotions, attitudes, and social relationships. One of the most common expressive speech acts in communication is the compliment. Compliments are used to show admiration, appreciation, politeness, and encouragement toward another person. They play a significant role in creating positive interaction and maintaining social harmony.In modern linguistics, compliment speech acts are studied within pragmatics and sociolinguistics because their meaning depends on context, communicative intention, and cultural norms. Different cultures use compliments differently according to their traditions and social values. English and Uzbek societies are interesting examples because both cultures actively use compliments, but their pragmatic functions and communicative styles differ.The purpose of this article is to analyze the pragmatic functions of compliment speech acts in English and Uzbek societies and to identify their communicative and cultural characteristics.According to speech act theory developed by **John Austin** and **John Searle**, language performs not only informative but also social functions. Compliments belong to expressive speech acts because they express positive evaluation and feelings toward another

person.
Compliments may focus on appearance, behavior, achievements, skills, or personal qualities. Expressions such as “You look wonderful,” “Your work is excellent,” or “You are very talented” are examples of compliment speech acts.
From a pragmatic point of view, compliments perform several important functions:
1.expressing admiration and appreciation;
2.maintaining politeness;
3.strengthening interpersonal relationships;
4.encouraging and motivating people;
5.reducing social distance between speakers.
The meaning of compliments depends on context, tone, and social relationship between speakers. Sometimes compliments express sincere admiration, while in other situations they may function strategically to gain sympathy or maintain communication.In English-speaking societies, compliments are widely used in everyday communication. English compliments are usually short, direct, and positive. People commonly compliment appearance, clothing, success, abilities, or personality. Examples include expressions such as “Great job!”, “You look amazing,” and “I like your presentation.”
One important pragmatic function of compliments in English society is creating friendly and informal interaction. Compliments help reduce social distance and establish comfortable communication. In workplaces and educational environments, compliments are also used to motivate people and encourage cooperation.
Another characteristic of English compliment culture is the expected response. English speakers usually accept compliments directly by saying “Thank you.” Such responses are considered polite and socially appropriate.In some cases, compliments may also perform indirect pragmatic functions. Speakers may use compliments to begin conversations, soften criticism, or create a positive atmosphere in communication.In Uzbek society, compliments are closely connected with national culture and traditional etiquette. Uzbek people use compliments to express sincerity, respect, hospitality, and kindness. Compliments are especially important during family gatherings, celebrations, and guest-host communication.Uzbek compliments are usually more emotional and expressive than English compliments. Common expressions include “Judayam chiroyli ekansiz,” “Qo‘lingiz gul ekan,” and “Tarbiyangizga gap yo‘q.” Such compliments reflect cultural values related to morality, behavior, and family upbringing.One important feature of Uzbek compliments is modesty in response. Uzbek speakers often avoid directly accepting compliments because humility is highly valued in Uzbek culture. Instead, speakers may minimize their achievements or politely deny praise.Compliments in Uzbek society also strengthen interpersonal respect and social harmony. Older people often compliment younger individuals to encourage them, while younger speakers use compliments carefully to show respect toward elders.Although compliments are common in both English and Uzbek societies, there are several cultural differences between them.First, English compliments are generally direct and concise, while Uzbek compliments are more emotional and descriptive. English speakers prefer short expressions, whereas Uzbek speakers often use expressive language and cultural symbolism.Second, responses to compliments differ. English speakers usually accept compliments openly, while Uzbek speakers tend to respond modestly.Third, compliments in English communication often function as conversational strategies, while Uzbek compliments usually reflect sincerity, hospitality, and emotional warmth.Despite these differences, compliments in both cultures help create positive communication, maintain politeness, and strengthen social relationships.

Conclusion

Compliment speech acts are an important part of pragmatic communication. They express admiration, politeness, encouragement, and positive evaluation. Although compliments are universal in human communication, their forms and functions differ according to cultural and social traditions.The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek compliment speech acts shows that language and culture are deeply interconnected. English compliments are generally direct and interaction-oriented, while Uzbek compliments are emotional, modest, and culturally expressive.Studying compliment speech acts is important for understanding intercultural communication and improving pragmatic competence in foreign language learning and translation studies.

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