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THE PRAGMATIC PURPOSE OF EMOTIVE UNITS EXPRESSING JOY: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: This study compares the pragmatic purposes (maqsad) of joy-expressing emotive units in English and Uzbek. Drawing on the theory of emotivity (Shakhovsky, 2008), the functional semantics of evaluation (Wolf, 1985), speech-act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976), and the ethnosociopragmatic model of Safarov and Toirova (2007), it analyses joy-emotives in Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook and Said Ahmad's Qirq besh kun. In both languages such units fuse two purposes: the illocutionary expression of the speaker's own positive state and the perlocutionary effort to affect the hearer and build rapport. The languages differ in their means: English encodes joy lexically, through manner adverbs, affect adjectives, verbs of enjoyment, and idioms in the reporting frame, whereas Uzbek encodes it morphologically and ritually, through the diminutive -gina, vocative endearments, and gratitude formulae. The contrast is interpreted as linguocultural.

Keywords: emotive units, emotivity, joy, pragmatic purpose, illocutionary force, perlocutionary effect, English–Uzbek contrastive pragmatics

Introduction

Language not only transmits information but expresses and evokes feeling. Emotivity is the linguistic encoding of emotion (Shakhovsky, 2008), and emotive units are the forms whose communicative task is to convey or arouse it: interjections, affect-laden words, evaluative adjectives and adverbs, diminutive morphemes, idioms, and conventionalized formulae. Among the emotions, joy (Uzbek xursandchilik) is positive and affiliative, oriented toward sharing rather than distance; yet, as Wierzbicka (1999) shows, the means a language offers for expressing it are culturally shaped, which makes joy a productive object for English–Uzbek comparison.

The study adopts a pragmatic frame. For Safarov and Toirova (2007), every act of communication is organized around a purpose (maqsad), and the speaker selects among equivalent means the one that best realizes it in a given ethnic, social, and situational setting; emotive units are thus goal-directed choices. Speech-act theory locates the expression of positive emotion in Searle's (1976) expressives—thanking, congratulating, welcoming, expressing pleasure—while Wolf (1985) argues that emotive-evaluative utterances carry two intentions: to express the speaker's feeling and to arouse the hearer's. Shakhovsky's parameters of emotive intention, modality, degree, and orientation (as discussed in Baymuradova, 2022), together with Issers's (2011) account of emotional tuning as an auxiliary strategy, complete the framework.

Contrastive studies that isolate the pragmatic purposes of joy-specific emotive units in English and Uzbek remain scarce; the broader literature on communicative strategy concentrates on conflict and persuasion (Gulakova, 2013; Issers, 2011). This paper asks what formal devices express joy in each language, what pragmatic purposes they serve, and how the two languages differ.

Method

The corpus comprises dialogue-rich passages from Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook (1962) for English and Said Ahmad's Qirq besh kun for Uzbek. From a larger emotive set extracted from each text, units expressing joy and adjacent positive affect—gladness, cheerfulness, pleasure, mirth, affectionate tenderness, and thankful contentment—were isolated; negative-emotion units, which predominate in both works, were retained only as contrast. The joy subset is therefore illustrative rather than exhaustive, and the analysis is qualitative.

Following Safarov and Toirova (2007), the unit of analysis is the emotive unit as a communication unit: a form–meaning pairing realized in interaction, ranging from a bound morpheme (the diminutive -gina) to idioms and formulae. Each unit was examined for its formal type, its place on Wolf's (1985) self- versus hearer-directed axis, its illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976), and its function within the speaker's communicative purpose (Issers, 2011). Uzbek units are transliterated and glossed, emotive units are italicized, and page references follow the editions used.

Results

Joy-emotive units in English (Lessing)

In English, joy is encoded mainly in the reporting frame around direct speech. Manner adverbs colour a speech act with positive affect: cheerfully signals a buoyant disposition (Lessing, 1962, pp. 4, 18), though in one case it is at once qualified as “slightly aggressive,” showing the form used as a strategic surface. Affect adjectives predicate joy directly—exuberant of an overflowing display, glad of contented satisfaction (pp. 9, 15). Verbs of enjoyment report pleasure: enjoyed, here taken in another's discomfiture, fuses joy with self-assertion (p. 9). The lexis of pleasure includes the narratorial sighing with pleasure (p. 12) and the hyperbolic idiom a whale of a good time (p. 15). Mirth surfaces as laughed and a snort of laughter (pp. 18, 23), where shared laughter both bonds two friends and operates as a unit of condemnation against a third party. Through Wolf's (1985) lens these units range from self-expression (enjoyed, glad) to hearer-effect (shared laughter), but most fuse the two; the purposes served are self-expression, action on the hearer, phatic contact, positive evaluation, and intensification.

Joy-emotive units in Uzbek (Said Ahmad)

In Uzbek, positive affect is built into address and morphology. The diminutive -gina turns neutral nouns into carriers of tenderness: arzandagina(ng) (your dear little darling), bolagina(m) (my dear child), choygina(ng) (your dear tea), onagina(ng) (your dear mother) (Said Ahmad, n.d., pp. 7, 12, 15). Vocative endearment formulae address the hearer directly: jon bolam (my dear child), onaginang o'rgilsin (may your mother dote on you), bolangdan aylanay (an idiom of devoted affection), and the affectionate reproach tentagim (my dear silly one) (pp. 7, 9, 12, 14). Gratitude formulae voice joyful relief: (O'zingga) shukur (thanks be to God) and Xudo shu kunlarga ham yetkazdi (God has let me reach these days) frame joy as thankful contentment (p. 7); as a speech act, shukur approaches Searle's (1976) thanking, addressed to the divine. Carefree joy appears in the reduplicative o'ynab-kulib (“playing and laughing,” p. 7). These units serve the same purposes as the English set but are markedly other-directed: the endearments comfort and draw the addressee

close, doing relational and phatic work, and they index the benevolent identity of the elder who utters them (Safarov & Toirova, 2007).

Table 1 aligns the two inventories by shared pragmatic purpose.

Table 1

Joy-emotive devices in English and Uzbek aligned by pragmatic purpose

Pragmatic purpose (maqsad)	English devices (Lessing)	Uzbek devices (Said Ahmad)
Expressing the speaker's own positive state (illocutionary)	enjoyed; glad; sighing with pleasure	shukur; Xudo shu kunlarga ham yetkazdi
Acting on the hearer / building rapport (perlocutionary)	cheerfully; laughed	jon bolam; aylanay; o'rgilsin
Phatic contact (opening / sustaining the channel)	shared laughter in dialogue	affectionate greeting with -gina forms
Positive evaluation of person or event	exuberant; a whale of a good time	arzandagina; bolagina; tentagim
Intensification / heightened expressivity	idiom and hyperbole	diminutive -gina; reduplication o'ynab-kulib

Note. Devices are illustrative of the joy subset of the corpus and are not exhaustive.

Discussion

In both languages, the self-expressive and hearer-directed intentions of joy-emotives are typically fused (Wolf, 1985; Baymuradova, 2022): to speak cheerfully, or to call a child jon bolam, is at once to vent a positive state and to act on the addressee. Such units gravitate toward Searle's (1976) expressives while routinely carrying perlocutionary force. Shakhovsky's parameters map onto the data: the modality is joy, opposed to the fear, anger, and grief that dominate the rest of both texts, and degree is scaled by idiom and hyperbole in English and by diminutives and reduplication in Uzbek.

The principal finding is contrastive and concerns the locus of encoding. English encodes joy lexically, in the narratorial frame that describes emotion from outside the quoted speech; Uzbek encodes it morphologically and through ritual address, building warmth into the noun with -gina and codifying it in formulae such as aylanay and o'rgilsin. The Uzbek diminutive thus exemplifies grammaticalized tenderness, where English compensates with separate lexical items. Following

Safarov and Toirova (2007), this is best read as linguocultural: the Uzbek pattern foregrounds relationship and ritual, including the gratitude-to-God frame of shukur, while the English pattern foregrounds individual report, consistent with Wierzbicka's (1999) thesis that the repertoire for positive emotion is culturally shaped.

A positive form does not guarantee a cooperative purpose: cheerfulness can mask aggression and laughter can enforce exclusion, so the purpose of an emotive unit depends on its deployment within a strategy (Issers, 2011), not on its form alone. The findings are limited by a small, qualitative corpus drawn from two literary works in which joy is under-represented, by the stylization of literary dialogue, and by the absence of prosodic data.

Conclusion

Joy-expressing emotive units in English and Uzbek serve a common set of pragmatic purposes organized around the speaker's purpose (maqsad)—expressing a positive state, acting on the hearer, sustaining contact, evaluating positively, and intensifying—with their illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions characteristically fused. The languages diverge in the locus of joy: English favours lexical encoding in the reporting frame, Uzbek morphological encoding through the diminutive -gina together with ritual endearment and gratitude formulae. This contrast is linguocultural, reflecting the ethnosociopragmatic principle that equivalent ends are realized through culturally preferred means. The study offers a focused, joy-specific contribution to contrastive pragmatics and to the analysis of emotive units as purposeful communicative instruments.

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