

COMPARATIVE SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF ATTITUDE EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK AND THEIR RENDERING IN MACHINE TRANSLATION SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the comparative semantic and pragmatic characteristics of linguistic expressions that convey personal attitude, evaluation, agreement, disagreement, hesitation, certainty, approval, and emotional stance in English and Uzbek. Particular attention is paid to the way such expressions are interpreted and rendered by machine translation platforms. The study argues that attitude expressions are highly context-dependent and that their meanings are shaped not only by lexical content but also by politeness strategies, modality, cultural norms, discourse situation, and speaker intention. A comparative analysis demonstrates that structurally similar expressions may differ in pragmatic force across the two languages, which can lead to literal, weakened, intensified, or culturally inappropriate machine translation. The thesis proposes a functional classification of attitude expressions and identifies the main challenges for machine translation systems in preserving pragmatic meaning.

Keywords: attitude expression, pragmatics, semantics, modality, politeness, English, Uzbek, machine translation, pragmatic equivalence, discourse context.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital communication and artificial intelligence has substantially increased the role of machine translation in intercultural and interlingual communication. However, despite rapid advances in neural machine translation, the transfer of subjective meaning remains one of the most difficult linguistic tasks. Expressions such as “I think,” “I am afraid,” “in my opinion,” “perhaps,” “of course,” “menimcha,” “nazdimda,” “afsuski,” and “albatta” do more than convey propositional content: they signal the speaker’s stance, confidence, politeness, emotional position, and relationship with the addressee (1,2).

In English and Uzbek, personal attitude can be expressed through modal verbs, adverbs, parenthetical constructions, discourse markers, evaluative vocabulary, particles, and syntactic patterns. These devices often have no one-to-one equivalents because their use depends on cultural expectations, conversational norms, and context. Therefore, a comparative semantic-pragmatic study of attitude expressions is important both for theoretical linguistics and for the improvement of machine translation quality (3,4).

MAIN PART

From a semantic perspective, attitude expressions encode evaluation, certainty, doubt, preference, emotional reaction, and epistemic or deontic stance. From a pragmatic perspective, they regulate the interpersonal dimension of communication. For example, the English phrase “I think” may function as a genuine marker of opinion, but it may also mitigate disagreement. Its Uzbek equivalent “menimcha”

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frequently performs a similar function, although in some contexts Uzbek speakers may prefer more indirect forms such as “nazarimda,” “menga shunday tuyuladiki,” or impersonal constructions. Thus, formal equivalence does not always guarantee pragmatic equivalence (5,6).

Politeness is particularly important in the translation of attitude expressions. English discourse often uses hedging devices such as “perhaps,” “maybe,” “I suppose,” and “I am not sure, but...”. Uzbek may express comparable meanings through lexical hedges, respectful forms, sentence particles, or indirect syntactic organization. If a machine translation system selects only the closest lexical match, the output may sound too direct, too weak, or stylistically unnatural. This problem is especially visible in academic, professional, diplomatic, and interpersonal communication (7,8).

Table 1. Comparative pragmatic features of selected attitude expressions

Function	English example	Uzbek equivalent	Potential MT issue
Opinion / stance	I think...	Menimcha...	Usually close, but degree of certainty may differ.
Hedging	Perhaps / maybe	Balki / ehtimol	Context may require different strength of uncertainty.
Regret / emotion	Unfortunately	Afsuski	Often equivalent, but discourse placement may differ.
Certainty	Of course	Albatta	Can sound stronger or more categorical depending on context.
Soft disagreement	I am not sure I agree	Bu fikrga to'liq qo'shila olmayman	Literal translation may become overly direct or awkward.
Personal viewpoint	In my opinion	Mening fikrimcha	Generally equivalent, but register and frequency may differ.

The table shows that attitude expressions should be translated according to communicative function rather than lexical form alone. A system that treats “of course” and “albatta” as exact equivalents in every context may fail to account for differences in emphasis, speaker authority, politeness, or irony. Similarly, English softening formulas often require broader restructuring in Uzbek in order to preserve interpersonal meaning.

Machine translation platforms based on neural and transformer architectures perform better than older phrase-based systems because they process wider contexts and capture statistical relations between words and constructions. Nevertheless, they may still misinterpret implicit evaluation, irony, culturally marked politeness, or pragmatic attenuation. The problem becomes more evident when a sentence is

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short and lacks sufficient context. In such cases, a system may choose a semantically plausible but pragmatically unsuitable equivalent (9,10).

For improving translation quality, machine translation systems should integrate pragmatic annotation, context-sensitive corpora, parallel datasets containing conversational and evaluative language, and user-oriented post-editing mechanisms. For English-Uzbek translation, special attention should be paid to modality, respectful address, hedging, discourse particles, and culture-specific patterns of expressing agreement and disagreement. A functional-pragmatic dictionary of frequently used attitude expressions could also support both human translators and AI-based translation tools.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis confirms that personal attitude expressions in English and Uzbek represent a complex interaction of semantics, pragmatics, modality, politeness, and cultural convention. Although many expressions have apparent lexical equivalents, their communicative force may differ significantly depending on discourse context. Therefore, successful machine translation requires more than word-level correspondence.

The most frequent translation problems include excessive literalness, loss of politeness, inappropriate strengthening or weakening of stance, and failure to preserve implied emotional or evaluative meaning. Improving machine translation of such units requires pragmatically annotated bilingual corpora, broader contextual modeling, and language-specific datasets reflecting authentic English and Uzbek communication. These measures can contribute to more natural, culturally appropriate, and communicatively accurate machine translation.

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