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COMPARATIVE SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC TYPOLOGY OF PERSONAL-ATTITUDE EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK AND THEIR APPLICATION IN MACHINE TRANSLATION PLATFORMS

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Abstract. This study develops a comparative semantic-pragmatic typology of English and Uzbek expressions that encode a speaker's personal attitude and examines their relevance for machine translation. A purposive bilingual corpus of 80 expressions was classified into eight pragmatic types: respect/deference, gratitude/appreciation, approval/admiration, disagreement/reluctance, disapproval/criticism, affection/solidarity, empathy/consolation, and indifference/acceptance. The analysis combines componential semantics, speech-act interpretation, contextual comparison, and translation-risk assessment. Results show that structurally simple expressions may still be pragmatically non-equivalent because interpersonal meaning is distributed across lexical choice, mitigation, social deixis, conventional politeness, and culture-specific phraseology. Uzbek formulas such as "bosh ustiga", "ko'nglingizga olmang", and "xafa bo'lmang-u" require functional rather than literal English equivalents, while English formulas such as "with all due respect", "I'm afraid I disagree", and "you shouldn't have" similarly demand pragmatic adaptation in Uzbek. The study proposes a context-enriched translation workflow for machine translation systems and argues that phrase-level databases should encode illocutionary function, politeness value, register, social relation, and preferred equivalents in addition to lexical meaning.

Keywords: personal attitude; semantic-pragmatic typology; English; Uzbek; phraseology; politeness; machine translation; pragmatic equivalence.

INTRODUCTION

Personal-attitude expressions occupy an intermediate zone between lexical semantics and interpersonal pragmatics. They name or imply approval, gratitude, affection, respect, disappointment, disagreement, criticism, empathy, resignation, and other speaker stances, but their communicative value is rarely reducible to dictionary meaning. In Uzbek linguistics, pragmalinguistic interpretation emphasizes the dependence of meaning on the communicative intention, speech situation, participant relations, and culturally conventional forms of interaction (1,2). Anthropocentric approaches likewise treat language as a system in which the speaker's evaluation and cultural experience are encoded in text and discourse (3,4).

English and Uzbek differ typologically and socioculturally. English often realizes interpersonal stance through modal verbs, discourse markers, hedges, conventional indirectness, and fixed politeness formulas; Uzbek makes extensive use of social deixis, honorific address, optative and concessive forms, culturally marked blessings, and figurative phraseology. Phraseological meaning is especially important because the pragmatic function of a fixed expression may be preserved even when its lexical images differ considerably across languages

(5,7). Consequently, translation must often prioritize communicative effect rather than formal correspondence.

The problem becomes more visible in machine translation (MT). Neural systems are highly effective for frequent compositional patterns, but context-sensitive and idiomatic expressions remain difficult, particularly for lower-resource language pairs and culturally loaded units (10,11,15). Recent Uzbek research has also shown that automatic translation of idioms requires richer databases, morphological processing, and explicit cross-lingual equivalence information (11). From a pragmatic perspective, the challenge is not merely whether a system produces a grammatical sentence, but whether it preserves stance, politeness, social distance, mitigation, and implied evaluation.

The purpose of this study is therefore threefold: (a) to classify personal-attitude expressions in English and Uzbek according to semantic-pragmatic function; (b) to compare their structural and cultural realization; and (c) to identify the factors that make such expressions vulnerable to pragmatic distortion in machine translation. The study does not rank commercial platforms or claim controlled benchmark accuracy; instead, it establishes a linguistically grounded risk model that can be used in the design, evaluation, and post-editing of MT outputs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research employed a comparative-descriptive and semantic-pragmatic methodology. A purposive analytical corpus of 80 recurrent or representative personal-attitude expressions was compiled from Uzbek phraseological and explanatory sources, translation studies, pragmatic descriptions, and commonly documented English interpersonal formulas (1,5,6,8,9,12). The corpus was balanced to include both direct evaluative formulas and indirect forms whose interpersonal meaning emerges only in context. Because the goal was typological coverage rather than frequency estimation, the numerical distribution reflects the composition of the analytical sample, not population-level frequency in either language.

Each expression was coded according to five parameters: (1) core evaluative meaning; (2) illocutionary function; (3) degree of conventionality or idiomaticity; (4) politeness and social-distance value; and (5) translation strategy required for functional equivalence. The main categories were respect/deference, gratitude/appreciation, approval/admiration, disagreement/reluctance, disapproval/criticism, affection/solidarity, empathy/consolation, and indifference/acceptance. The coding follows the view that politeness and interpersonal meaning are negotiated through face-sensitive strategies and contextual choices rather than isolated words (12,13).

For MT-oriented analysis, every category was assigned an analytical risk index from 0 to 5. The index combines four equally weighted criteria: non-compositionality, context dependence, culture-specificity, and sensitivity to register/social relation. A higher value means that literal or context-poor translation is more likely to alter the intended interpersonal effect. This index is a linguistic diagnostic, not an empirical accuracy score for Google Translate, DeepL, Yandex Translate, or any other individual platform. Translation solutions were evaluated according to pragmatic equivalence and target-language naturalness, consistent with functional approaches in translation studies (6,14).

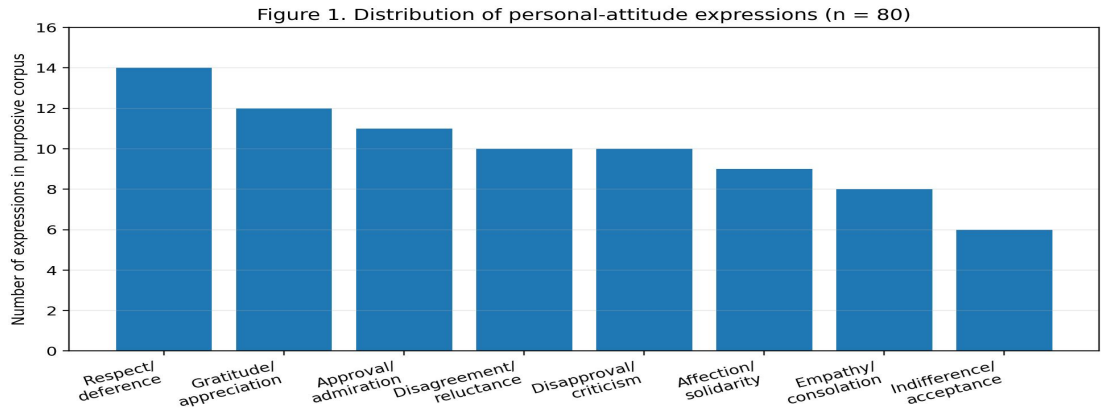
RESULTS

The analysis identified eight stable pragmatic zones. The largest segment of the purposive corpus involved respect and deference, reflecting the high functional load of social relation, mitigation, and addressee orientation in Uzbek interpersonal discourse. Gratitude and approval were comparatively more transparent, whereas disagreement, affection, empathy, and culturally conventional deference forms showed higher dependence on context and idiomatic equivalence.

Table 1. Comparative semantic-pragmatic typology and representative equivalents

Pragmatic type	English example	Uzbek functional equivalent	Main translation issue
Respect / deference	With all due respect...	Hurmat bilan aytsam... / Hurmat qilgan holda...	Literal wording may sound unnatural; mitigation must be preserved.
Gratitude / appreciation	I owe you one.	Yaxshiligingizni qaytaraman / Sizdan qarzdorman.	Informal indebtedness should not become financial debt.
Approval / admiration	That's very kind of you.	Juda mehribonlik qildingiz / Katta rahmat.	Evaluation and gratitude may merge in Uzbek.
Disagreement / reluctance	I'm afraid I disagree.	Afsuski, bu fikrga qo'shila olmayman.	"Afraid" is a hedge, not literal fear.
Disapproval / criticism	No offense, but...	Xafa bo'lmang-u... / Aybga buyurmang-u...	Face-saving preface requires cultural adaptation.
Affection / solidarity	I'm with you on this.	Bu masalada sizni qo'llab-quvvatlayman / Men siz tomondaman.	Idiomatic solidarity vs. physical proximity.
Empathy / consolation	Don't take it personally.	Ko'nglingizga olmang.	Uzbek metaphor is non-compositional.
Indifference / acceptance	Suit yourself.	Mayli, o'zingiz bilasiz.	Can signal neutral permission or irritated resignation.

Table 1 demonstrates that seemingly close expressions often differ in their semantic center. For example, English "I'm afraid I disagree" conventionally softens disagreement; translating "afraid" as physical fear would misrepresent its pragmatic role. Conversely, Uzbek "ko'nglingizga olmang" literally invokes the "heart/soul" concept but pragmatically functions as a mitigation or consolation formula. Such cases support the argument that translation equivalence must be established at the level of communicative function, not isolated lexical components (2,4,6).



The corpus composition in Figure 1 was intentionally diversified to avoid reducing "personal attitude" to positive emotion alone. Respect/deference (14 items), gratitude/appreciation (12), and approval/admiration (11) formed the largest groups; the remaining categories captured negative, ambivalent, or solidarity-oriented stances. This distribution is methodologically useful because machine translation must handle both explicit evaluation and pragmatically indirect stance markers.

Table 2. Typical MT vulnerabilities and recommended processing strategies

Problem type	Example	Possible distortion	Recommended MT treatment
Literalization of idiom	bosh ustiga	"on the head"	Store phrase-level equivalent: certainly / gladly.
Hedge misinterpretation	I'm afraid I disagree	fear is introduced	Tag as discourse hedge + disagreement act.
Social-deictic loss	ustoz, aka, opa in address	omitted or over-literal title	Model address function, age/status, and register.
Politeness flattening	xafa bo'lmang-u...	bare criticism	Preserve mitigation marker before negative evaluation.
Ambivalence loss	mayli, o'zingiz bilasiz	neutral "okay" only	Use wider context to detect resignation/irritation.
Cultural blessing	baraka toping	odd literal blessing	Map by context to thank you / bless you / much appreciated.

The MT-oriented analysis shows that the main danger is not always grammatical error. A system can generate a grammatically acceptable sentence while changing the interpersonal force. This is particularly likely where an expression carries mitigation, indirect disagreement, culturally conventional gratitude, or a stance that depends on intonation and preceding discourse. Uzbek studies of machine and human translation similarly emphasize cultural sensitivity, idiomaticity, and contextual adequacy as persistent challenges (10,11).

Figure 2. Context-and-culture translation risk by pragmatic type

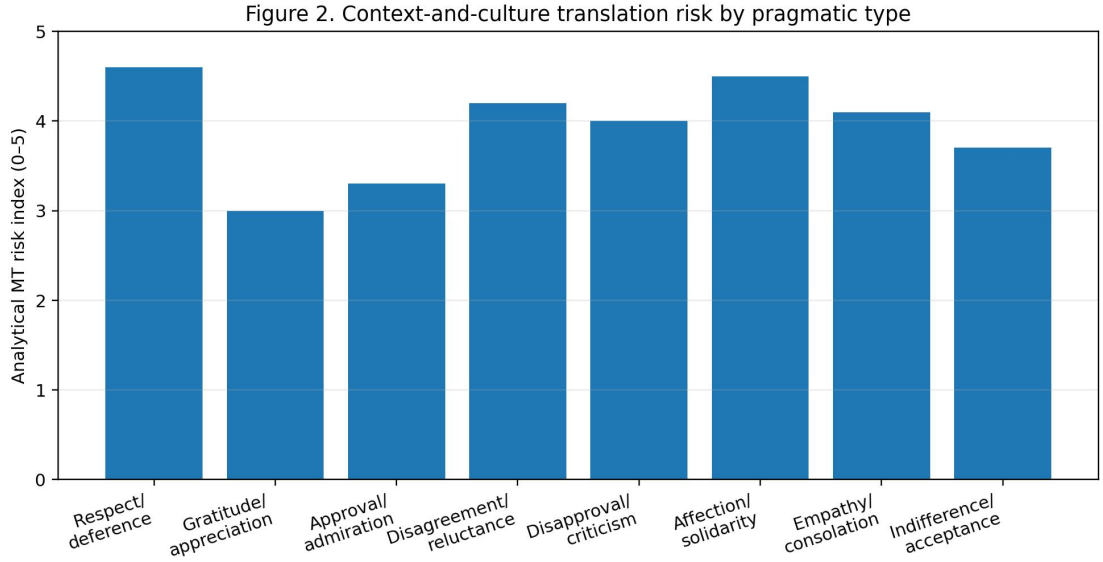


Figure 2 visualizes the analytical MT risk index. Respect/deference and affection/solidarity received the highest scores because their interpretation frequently depends on social relation, register, and non-literal conventional meaning. Disagreement and empathy were also high-risk because a single lexical item may function as a hedge, face-saving device, or metaphorical consolation. Gratitude and approval were relatively lower-risk, yet even these categories contain formulas such as “you shouldn’t have” or “baraka toping” whose literal meanings diverge sharply from their communicative functions.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that personal-attitude expressions are best treated as multi-layered pragmatic units. Their interpretation requires a combination of propositional meaning and interpersonal indexing. Uzbek pragmalinguistics has long emphasized communicative intention and context (1,2), while phraseological studies show that figurative meaning and stylistic value are integral to fixed units (5,7). In the present comparison, the same function may be realized by different linguistic mechanisms: English often uses modalized or hedged clauses, whereas Uzbek frequently employs conventional formulas, social address, metaphorical expressions, and culturally marked evaluative patterns.

The contrast is especially visible in politeness. Brown and Levinson’s face-based framework explains why disagreement and criticism are commonly mitigated, but the concrete realization of mitigation is language- and culture-specific (12). Leech’s later politeness model also highlights the role of interpersonal goals and evaluative balance (13). Thus, a literal translation can preserve the proposition but violate the expected politeness profile. “With all due respect” is not adequately represented by a mechanical calque if the resulting Uzbek formula sounds bureaucratic or confrontational; similarly, “xafa bo‘lmang-u” should not be reduced to a lexical request not to become upset when it actually prepares the hearer for disagreement or criticism.

These observations have direct implications for MT. Modern neural translation learns probabilistic correspondences from large corpora, and performance improves when frequent patterns are well represented (15). However, lower-resource language pairs are more exposed to sparse phrase-level evidence. Recent research on English–Uzbek idioms argues for explicit

databases of equivalent expressions and computational treatment of phraseology (11). From the perspective of this study, such databases should be pragmatically enriched: each entry should include speech-act function, polarity, register, social role, optionality of address forms, typical collocations, and examples of context-dependent alternatives.

A practical workflow can therefore be proposed. First, the MT system should detect whether the source segment is a candidate multiword pragmatic unit. Second, it should retrieve phrase-level equivalents before applying ordinary word-by-word composition. Third, a context module should infer whether the stance is respectful, ironic, resigned, affectionate, or critical. Fourth, the system should choose a target expression matched for register and social relation. Finally, confidence-sensitive post-editing should be triggered when several pragmatic readings remain plausible. This approach follows the broader translation principle that equivalence is functional and contextual rather than merely formal (6,14).

The study has limitations. The corpus is purposive and relatively small, so the category counts should not be interpreted as frequency claims about English or Uzbek as a whole. The MT risk index is an analytical diagnostic, not a benchmark of specific commercial systems. Future research should therefore test a larger annotated corpus against multiple platform versions under controlled conditions, using both human pragmatic ratings and automatic metrics. Nevertheless, the present typology offers a reproducible linguistic framework for selecting test items and interpreting MT errors.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis demonstrates that English and Uzbek personal-attitude expressions form a structured pragmatic field rather than a loose collection of emotional words. Eight functional types were identified, and each type combines semantic evaluation with speech-act force, politeness, social relation, and cultural convention. The most translation-sensitive units are those in which literal form and interpersonal function diverge, including hedges, idioms, social-deictic forms, face-saving prefaces, and culturally conventional blessings or responses.

For machine translation, the central requirement is therefore pragmatic enrichment. Phrase-level resources should encode not only source and target strings but also communicative function, register, politeness value, social context, and alternative equivalents. Context-aware identification of such units can reduce literalization, preserve the speaker's stance, and improve naturalness in English–Uzbek and Uzbek–English translation. The proposed typology and risk model may serve as a basis for future annotated corpora, platform testing, and human-in-the-loop post-editing research.

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