

A PRAGMATIC INVESTIGATION OF BLESSINGS AND WISHES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Jurabekova Feruza Jura kizi

Master's student, Asian University of Technologies,

Karshi, Kashkadarya;

Tel: +998978259290;

e-mail: feruza.jurabekova@gmail.com

Abstract: Blessings and wishes serve as key speech acts conveying goodwill and hope in interpersonal communication. This study investigates their pragmatic functions and grammatical realizations in English and Uzbek, analyzing modality markers, sentence structures, and lexical choices. Data were drawn from spoken and written corpora, religious texts, and folk literature. The contrastive analysis shows that English employs modal auxiliaries and subjunctive moods, while Uzbek uses morphological suffixes and particles for modality. Cultural and religious backgrounds influence the linguistic expression in both languages. The study highlights implications for translation, language teaching, and cross-cultural understanding.

Keywords: blessings, wishes, modality, pragmatics, English, Uzbek, speech acts, cross-linguistic comparison

1. Introduction

Blessings and wishes are important speech acts expressing positive intentions and hopes towards others, widely used across cultures and languages [1:15]. They play critical roles in social interaction, ritual, and literature. Pragmatically, these acts reflect interpersonal relationships and cultural values [2:30]. English and Uzbek, from different language families—Indo-European and Turkic, respectively—use distinct grammatical and pragmatic strategies to convey blessings and wishes. English commonly utilizes modal auxiliaries and subjunctive moods, while Uzbek features optative suffixes and modal particles embedded in verb morphology [3:42], [7:120].

Despite the cultural significance of blessings and wishes, there is limited research directly contrasting their grammatical and pragmatic expression in English and Uzbek. This study seeks to fill this gap by addressing the following research questions:

1. What pragmatic functions do blessings and wishes perform in English and Uzbek?
2. What are the grammatical mechanisms for expressing these speech acts in each language?
3. How do cultural contexts shape their linguistic realization?

2. Methods

The study uses qualitative analysis grounded in cross-linguistic pragmatics and grammar. Data sources include:

- A selection of authentic spoken and written corpora in English and Uzbek.
- Religious texts and folk literature known for containing blessings and wishes.
- Recordings of natural conversational data from native speakers.

The analysis methodology involved:

- Extracting examples of blessings and wishes from diverse registers.
- Identifying core pragmatic functions in context.
- Analyzing grammatical constructions, focusing on modality markers such as auxiliary verbs, subjunctive mood (English), and optative suffixes and particles (Uzbek).
- Comparing syntactic and morphological strategies used in both languages.

The contrastive framework allowed systematic comparison to reveal convergences and divergences in form and function.

3. Results

3.1 Pragmatic Functions

In both languages, blessings and wishes primarily serve to express goodwill, hope, and invoke positive outcomes for the addressee. English blessings often involve religious or formal contexts, e.g., “God bless you,” whereas Uzbek blessings like “Alloh rozi bo‘lsin” (May God be pleased) reflect Islamic cultural influences. Wishes in English tend to be secular and personal (“I wish you success”), while Uzbek wishes often use verbal optative forms connected to cultural norms,[3:50].

3.2 Grammatical Realizations in English

English expresses blessings and wishes mainly through modal auxiliaries and subjunctive mood:

- Modal auxiliaries: “May you have a prosperous year.”
- Subjunctive constructions: “God bless you.”
- Periphrastic constructions with “let”: “Let peace prevail.”

These forms often rely on fixed phrases and verb inversion, especially in formal or ritualistic speech [6:105].

3.3 Grammatical Realizations in Uzbek

Uzbek uses rich morphological marking to realize modality:

- Optative mood suffixes (“-sin,” “-sinlar”) attached directly to verbs: “Uyg'on-sin” (May he wake up).
- Use of modal particles and auxiliary verbs expressing volition or desire: “Bo'lasiz” (You will be), “Qilaversin” (May he keep doing).
- The compact morphology allows for concise expression of wishes without auxiliary words [7:125],[8:89].

4. Discussion

The results highlight significant differences rooted in linguistic typology and culture. English, with analytical structure, relies on modal verbs and subjunctive syntax to express modality, while Uzbek's agglutinative morphology integrates modal meanings within verb forms. This morphological embedding facilitates flexible yet compact expressions of blessings and wishes in Uzbek.

Culturally, the prominence of religious references in Uzbek blessings corresponds with the Islamic majority context, contrasting with English blessings derived largely from Judeo-Christian influences or secular forms [3:50]. The pragmatic function of expressing hope or goodwill is universal, but linguistic realizations vary considerably, impacting translation and cross-cultural communication.

For instance, literal translation of Uzbek optative suffixes into English modal auxiliaries is often inadequate without contextual adaptation. Teaching these nuances is critical for learners and translators to achieve natural and effective communication.

5. Conclusion

This study provides a comparative insight into how blessings and wishes are pragmatically and grammatically expressed in English and Uzbek. English employs modal auxiliaries and subjunctive forms, whereas Uzbek exploits morphological suffixes and particles to express similar speech acts. Cultural contexts shape the semantic and pragmatic dimensions, reflecting differing religious and social norms. Understanding these distinctions enhances translation accuracy and cultural competence in language learning and intercultural interactions.

Future research may extend to other speech act categories and additional Turkic and Indo-European languages to deepen understanding of modality and cultural pragmatics.

References

1. Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge University Press.

3. Karimov, A. (2017). Cultural Influence on Speech Acts: Blessings and Wishes in Uzbek and English. *Journal of Central Asian Linguistics*, 12(1), 40–55.
4. Palmer, F. R. (2001). *Mood and Modality* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
5. Coates, J. (1983). *The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries*. Croom Helm.
6. Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Tadjibaeva, D. (2014). Grammatical Marking of Wishes and Blessings in Uzbek. *Uzbek Linguistics Review*, 7(2), 115–130.
8. Rahmonov, S. (2018). The Optative Mood in Turkic Languages: A Comparative Study. *Turkic Linguistics Journal*, 15(3), 85–92.