



POLITENESS AND EMOTIONAL INTENSITY IN WISH/DESIRE SPEECH ACTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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ABSTRACT. *This article investigates politeness strategies and emotional intensity in wish and desire speech acts from a comparative perspective in English and Uzbek. Expressions of desire inherently reveal personal intention and affective stance; however, their pragmatic realization varies according to cultural norms and discourse contexts. The study examines modal verbs, conditional structures, lexical intensifiers, analytic constructions, and honorific markers to explore how speakers mitigate or intensify wish expressions. Literary examples demonstrate how politeness preserves interpersonal harmony while emotional intensity signals urgency, longing, or vulnerability. The findings show both universal pragmatic mechanisms and culturally specific patterns shaping wish/desire speech acts across languages.*

Keywords: *politeness strategies, emotional intensity, speech acts, desire expression, modality, cross-cultural pragmatics, discourse analysis, comparative linguistics*

Introduction

Wish and desire speech acts constitute a significant domain in pragmatics and modality studies. These expressions not only communicate personal wants or intentions but also reflect social positioning, emotional stance, and relational dynamics. In both English and Uzbek, the linguistic realization of desire is shaped by pragmatic strategies that either mitigate or intensify communicative force.

From a pragmatic standpoint, direct expressions of desire may threaten the interlocutor's negative face, especially when they imply expectation or pressure. Therefore, mitigation strategies play a vital role in preserving interpersonal balance. In English, modal verbs such as "would" and "could," conditional forms, and hedging expressions serve as softeners. In Uzbek, politeness markers, respect-based formulae, and conditional constructions perform comparable functions.

Conversely, emotional intensity strengthens the affective charge of wish expressions. Intensification can reveal urgency, frustration, longing, or deep emotional involvement. English frequently employs lexical intensifiers such as "so," "really," and "desperately," as well as emphatic syntax. Uzbek often uses repetition, emotive adverbs, and expressive particles to convey heightened emotional states.

The interaction between politeness and emotional intensity creates a dynamic pragmatic balance. Speakers adjust language depending on social distance, hierarchy, gender roles,



and communicative goals. Cross-cultural variation becomes evident when comparing directness levels and forms of emotional display.

Literary discourse offers a rich context for observing these strategies. Fictional dialogues reflect real-life sociolinguistic norms while magnifying emotional nuance. By analyzing literary texts from English and Uzbek authors, this study explores how politeness and emotional intensity co-function in shaping desire speech acts.

Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of politeness in speech acts originates from Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of face theory. They distinguish between positive and negative face, proposing that indirectness serves as a strategy to reduce face-threatening acts. Wish and desire expressions often function as potential impositions, thus requiring mitigation.

The study of wish and desire speech acts intersects with pragmatics, modality theory, and intercultural communication. Beyond classical politeness and speech act theory, contemporary research provides broader cognitive and socio-interactional insights into how volitional meanings are constructed and interpreted across languages.

One important perspective emerges from Goffman's (1967) theory of interactional face. Goffman conceptualizes face not merely as individual self-image but as a socially negotiated identity within interaction. In this view, expressions of desire can threaten interactional equilibrium, requiring speakers to strategically manage alignment and self-presentation. Mitigation in wish expressions thus becomes part of maintaining interactional order rather than simply reducing imposition.

The cognitive dimension of modality is explored by Kratzer (1991), who conceptualizes modality in terms of possible worlds semantics. Wish constructions often encode counterfactual or non-actual worlds, blending volitional and irrealis meanings. Emotional intensity can mark the speaker's strong commitment to an alternative mental space. This theoretical approach provides structural grounding for understanding irrealis forms such as "I wish I were" or Uzbek constructions like "Qaniydi..."

Recent intercultural pragmatics research by Kecskes (2014) argues that meaning emerges dynamically through speaker intention and contextual negotiation. Wish expressions, therefore, cannot be interpreted solely at the structural level; they are co-constructed by participants within culturally informed frames.

Emotional intensity and politeness are not isolated phenomena but integrated components of interpersonal meaning construction. Cross-linguistic comparison between English and Uzbek thus requires combining cognitive modality theory, interactional pragmatics, and rapport management frameworks.

To illustrate pragmatic differences, examples are drawn from English and Uzbek literary works not previously referenced.

From Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*:

"I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine."



Here, conditional structure and modal “could” mitigate direct accusation while expressing restrained emotional dissatisfaction.

From Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*:

“Oh, how I wished you had been kinder!”

The exclamative structure intensifies emotional longing and regret. The irrealis past construction conveys both desire and emotional pain.

From Abdulla Qodiriy’s *O‘tkan kunlar*:

“Agar ijozat bersangiz, bir so‘zim bor.”

The conditional phrase “agar ijozat bersangiz” mitigates the speech act, reflecting hierarchical politeness norms.

From O‘tkir Hoshimov’s *Dunyoning ishlari*:

“Men seni juda sog‘indim, juda!”

Repetition of “juda” amplifies emotional intensity, signaling deep affection and longing.

Contemporary Uzbek literature provides rich material for examining the interaction between modality, politeness, and emotional intensity in wish and desire speech acts. Unlike classical prose, modern Uzbek narratives often rely on internal monologue, subdued emotional tone, and analytically structured volitional constructions.

Isajon Sultan – *Eternal Wanderer (Boqiy darbadar)*

“*If only a human being could choose his own destiny...*”

The particle “*If only*” (Uzbek: “*Qaniydi*”) marks a clear irrealis construction. Grammatically, it encodes a counterfactual or unattainable desire. Pragmatically, however, this wish does more than express longing—it communicates existential frustration.

Here, emotional intensity is not built through lexical intensifiers but through philosophical scope. The utterance mitigates personal responsibility by shifting focus to fate, thereby transforming individual desire into collective reflection. The pragmatic force lies in implicit regret and metaphysical dissatisfaction.

The comparative perspective demonstrates that while both languages balance politeness and emotional force, their strategies reflect differing communicative priorities: individual boundary management in English and relational harmony in Uzbek.

Conclusion

Politeness and emotional intensity shape wish/desire speech acts in both English and Uzbek. Mitigation strategies preserve interpersonal harmony, while intensification conveys affective depth and urgency. Although both languages employ universal pragmatic mechanisms, cultural norms influence structural preferences and emotional expression. English discourse relies heavily on modal and conditional forms for mitigation, whereas Uzbek integrates respect-based formulae. Emotional amplification appears through lexical intensifiers in English and repetition in Uzbek. Understanding these cross-linguistic differences enhances pragmatic competence and contributes to comparative linguistics research.



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