COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE ETIQUETTE PATTERNS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK COMMUNICATION

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Annotation. The thesis compares English and Uzbek etiquette formulas in terms of origin, internal form, grammatical structure and translatability. It shows that English formulas are mostly bleached signals, while Uzbek formulas often keep a transparent wish-based meaning, describes etiquette lacunae and strategies for translating them.

Keywords: etiquette formula, internal form, optative, etiquette lacuna, translation strategy, English, Uzbek.

Etiquette formulas – greetings, farewells, thanks, apologies, wishes, congratulations and condolences – are among the most frequent units of everyday speech, yet speakers reproduce them as ready-made wholes without reflecting on their meaning. F. Coulmas described them as conversational routines tied to standardised communication situations [3], and C. Ferguson showed that politeness formulas develop through shortening, fixation and loss of literal meaning [4].

Comparative studies of English and Uzbek usually treat etiquette as communicative behaviour, while the formulas themselves as linguistic signs – their origin, internal form, grammatical structure and fate in translation – remain insufficiently studied. Yet it is precisely at this level that national specificity becomes visible: according to E. M. Vereshchagin and V. G. Kostomarov, such units carry background cultural knowledge presupposed by native speakers [1]. The aim of this paper is to compare English and Uzbek etiquette formulas as linguistic units, to identify etiquette lacunae and ways of rendering them, and to consider the influence of English on modern Uzbek speech.

The material comprised the basic English and Uzbek formulas of greeting, farewell, thanking, apologising, welcoming, wishing, congratulating and expressing sympathy. Uzbek units were taken from the explanatory and phraseological dictionaries of Uzbek and from observation of everyday speech; English units – from descriptions of English conversational routines [3]. Etymological, structural-semantic, contrastive and translation analysis were applied.

The analysis reveals a clear asymmetry. Many frequent English formulas are reduced forms of older religious or courtly expressions: goodbye goes back to God be with ye, please to if you please, thank you is an elliptical form of I thank you, and sorry goes back to an Old English adjective meaning “distressed, grieved” [5]. Modern speakers no longer perceive these sources: goodbye contains neither God nor wish, and sorry does not necessarily express sorrow. In Ferguson’s terms, they have undergone complete semantic bleaching [4]. Uzbek formulas combine Arabic and Persian borrowings reflecting the Islamic cultural tradition of Central Asia (salom, rahmat, xayr, barakalla, xush kelibsiz) with native Turkic units (kechirasiz, hormang, charchamang, sog‘ bo‘ling). A large group of them keeps a transparent internal form: Qo‘lingiz dard ko‘rmasin (“may your hands not know pain”), Oq yo‘l (“a white road”), Osh bo‘lsin (“may it be nourishing food”), Kam bo‘lmang (“may you never be in want”) are understood literally, and this literal wish gives them their etiquette force.

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Both languages share single-word formulas (Thanks – Rahmat), elliptical adjective-plus-noun wishes (Good morning – Xayrli tong) and first-person performatives (I apologise – Uzr so‘rayman). The difference lies in the productivity of the other models. In English a wish is most often an imperative addressed to the hearer (Have a nice day, Enjoy your meal, Take care), who is grammatically presented as the agent of the desired state. The optative with may is limited to formal and religious contexts.

In Uzbek the optative in -sin is one of the most productive sources of etiquette formulas: congratulations (To‘ylaringiz muborak bo‘lsin), wishes at meals (Osh bo‘lsin), before a journey (Yo‘lingiz ochiq bo‘lsin) and condolences (Joylari jannatda bo‘lsin). Here the desired state is presented not as the hearer’s action but as something that should come about by itself or by divine will. A second specifically Uzbek model is the negative wish, in which the speaker wishes the absence of tiredness, pain or need: Hormang, addressed to a person at work, has its own fixed response Bor bo‘ling, while English offers only marginal parallels such as Don’t work too hard. The welcome formula Xush kelibsiz, built on the evidential past in -ibsiz, adds a tone of joyful surprise absent from English Welcome.

Formulas of one language that have no direct equivalent in the other were termed etiquette lacunae. The notion of lacuna reflects the fact that each language segments communicative situations in its own way and fixes ready-made formulas only for those situations that are culturally significant for its speakers. These lacunae are asymmetrical: Uzbek lacunae are mostly transparent blessings linked to work, food, hospitality, travel and health, while English ones are bleached or idiomatic formulas and courtesy routines between strangers. Hence an Uzbek formula translated into English loses its imagery, and an English one translated into Uzbek loses its idiomaticity.

Following M. Baker’s typology of strategies for non-equivalence [2], four solutions may be distinguished. Cultural substitution, or adaptation in the terms of J.-P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet [8], uses a target formula from the same situation (Oq yo‘l – Have a safe trip) and is preferred in business texts, subtitles and interpreting. Paraphrase conveys the function of the formula in neutral words (Kam bo‘lmang – Thank you so much). Literal, or in P. Newmark’s terms semantic, translation [7] preserves the imagery of the source (May your hands never know pain) and is justified in literary texts, where national colour is part of the author’s intention. Omission is possible for purely phatic formulas.

In contemporary Uzbek speech, especially among young people and online, borrowings (okey, sorry, bay-bay) and calques are spreading: Kuningiz yaxshi o‘tsin follows Have a nice day, and Yoqimli ishtaha reproduces bon appétit via Russian.

The results suggest that the main difference between the two systems lies in the degree to which literal meaning remains active: English formulas are mostly pure signals marking a moment of interaction, whereas Uzbek formulas more often remain meaningful statements, above all wishes. This agrees with C. Kramsch’s view that language not only expresses but also embodies cultural reality [6]. The grammatical findings point in the same direction: English wishes present the hearer as the active agent of their own well-being, whereas Uzbek optative and negative wishes present well-being as bestowed from outside or as protection from harm.

In conclusion, English and Uzbek etiquette formulas differ in origin, internal form and grammatical structure: English formulas are largely bleached signals expressing wishes through the imperative, while Uzbek formulas often retain a transparent wish-based meaning and rely on the optative in -sin and negative wishes. These differences create lacunae in both directions that require translation strategies chosen according to text type. In language teaching, formulas should be taught together with their internal form rather than as simple lists of equivalents.

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