

Verbal Image of the Concept of “Smile/Tabassum” from the Point of View of Emotional Linguistics

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ABSTRACT

This research paper uses the framework of emotional linguistics to investigate the verbal image of a smile. The study of emotional linguistics examines how emotions are expressed in language, and the idea of a “smile” is essential for conveying happy feelings in a cross-cultural context. This study compares and contrasts how the English and Uzbek languages understand smiling as an emotional and communicative act by examining the phraseological representations of the word “smile/tabassum” as well as how it is verbalized through lexemes.

Keywords: Smile, tabassum, emotional linguistics, lexemes, phraseological units, English language, Uzbek language

1. INTRODUCTION

A smile is a universal human expression; nonetheless, its verbal representation and cultural interpretations differ across languages and societies. The word representation of a smile in English and in society in Uzbek is conditioned by their society’s norms, tradition, and communicative style. The act of smiling is expressed differently in various languages and cultures, becoming ingrained in their linguistic and affective worldviews. The purpose of this essay is to investigate how phraseological units, lexemes, and emotional connotations are used in the English and Uzbek languages to encode the image of a smile.

2. EMOTIONAL LINGUISTICS

The study of emotional linguistics looks into the lexical, phraseological, and syntactic structures that are used to express emotions. As an emotional expression, smiling has multiple semantic layers that vary depending on the culture. Languages shed light on how people perceive a smile on an emotional and cognitive level through phraseological expressions, metaphors, idioms, and lexemes.

Numerous studies have focused on the role of non-verbal communication, for example, smiling, in cross-cultural settings. Hall [1] describes that strong reliance on non-verbal messages is characteristic of high-context cultures, such as Uzbek culture, while low-context cultures, such as English-speaking societies, have strong explicit messages. Wierzbicka [3] and Ter-Minasova [2] have focused on how feelings, for example, smiling, are encoded in languages. Uzbek linguists revealed the linguistic features of emotional concepts in their work. For example, M. F. Tadjiyeva [4] and A. N. Sadullayeva [7] studied the emotional concepts in English and Uzbek through comparative, linguistic-cultural and stylistic in their scientific works. The current paper makes use of such models to compare and contrast linguistic expression of a smile in English and in Uzbek.

3. THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “SMILE/TABASSUM” THROUGH LEXEMES

Certain lexemes help to represent a smile linguistically in both Uzbek and English. These words convey a variety of meanings, from forced politeness or sarcasm to true happiness.

Lexemes in English

- “Smile” is a general term for a friendly or joyful facial expression.
- “Grin” is a wider, frequently oversized smile that can occasionally convey mischief or laughter.
- “Beam” is a broad, dazzling smile that exudes happiness.
- “Smirk” is a small, frequently sarcastic or self-satisfied smile.

- “Sneer” is a smile that is mocking or disdainful [5].

Lexemes in Uzbek

- *Tabassum* is a kind and courteous smile that is frequently employed in formal or poetic settings.
- *Kulgi* is a broad smile or laugh that frequently conveys happiness and amusement.
- *Qahqaha* is loud and hearty laughter.

These lexemes highlight the diverse linguistic nuances that exist in the conceptualization of a smile in both languages.

Both common and distinctive viewpoints on this universal human expression are revealed by the verbalization of smiling through English and Uzbek lexemes. Cultural differences influence the classification and expression of smiles, even though both languages express a broad range of smiles. Smiling lexemes in other languages and their function in intercultural communication can be investigated further.

4. THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “SMILE/TABASSUM” THROUGH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

Both English and Uzbek cultures interpret smiling to signify friendliness, good behavior, and good feelings. The rate, interpretation, and use of smiling expressions, however, differ in accordance with views on expression and social interaction. Phraseology (from Greek φράσις/phrasis, “way of speaking” and -λογία -logia, “study of”), a significant aspect of linguistic studies, pertains to the study of set expressions, fixed phrases, idioms, and other multi-word lexical units that exhibit a degree of conventionalization [6].

In English-speaking societies, smiling is normally synonymous with friendliness, approachability, and openness. The lexicon reflects this through several idiomatic expressions and phrases for smiling, such as:

- “To put a smile on someone’s face” (to make someone happy).

- “A smile goes a long way” (suggesting the power of a smile in social interactions).
- “Grinning from ear to ear” (expressing extreme happiness).

Moreover, English employs figurative expressions such as “smile in one’s eyes” to express friendliness in the absence of smiling and “smile through pain” to express endurance. These expressions reveal that English culture associates smile with emotions ranging from happiness to irony and sarcasm.

In Uzbek culture, smiling carries deep customary and social meanings. Smiling is often connected to hospitality, respect, and social harmony. Uzbek also has a rich set of phraseological and metaphorical units reflecting the significance of a smile in communication. Some examples include:

- *O‘g‘izbo‘g‘ichlaribirqarichqochmoq* (To open the mouth from pleasant feeling).
- *Og‘ziqulog‘igayetmoq* (to smile continuously because of the joy).
- *Tishiningoqiniko‘rsatmoq* (to laugh in a negative sense).
- *Xandontashlab* (to laugh out loudly).

The social and emotional significance of a smile—which is frequently associated with warmth, sincerity, and politeness—is emphasized by Uzbek expressions.

Unlike English, where smiling is frequently used in business and everyday interactions, in Uzbek culture, excessive smiling is, on occasions, equated to insincerity in official settings. In professional and hierarchical settings, in general, smiling is used selectively and depends on context.

Aspect	English culture	Uzbek culture
Social meaning	Friendliness, positivity, openness	Respect, hospitality, sincerity
Idiomatic usage	Frequent, metaphorical	Common, often poetic
Professional setting	Encouraged	Used selectively, context-dependent
Traditional influence	Less emphasis on formal smiling	Strong connection to etiquette and social harmony

The findings suggest that while both cultures use smiling for bonding, their word choice and accompanying meanings are distinct. Smiling in English is oriented toward personal optimism and happiness, while in Uzbek culture, smiling is integrated into broader moral and social contexts. The study highlights the need for future studies on cultural codes and their impact on cross-cultural communication.

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