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DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK NEWS DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY AND TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

Directive speech acts – commands and appeals – are a vital component of news discourse, shaping how information prompts action or compliance. This thesis presents a comparative analysis of how directives are expressed in English and Uzbek news. Drawing on real news examples and speech act theory, it examines the linguistic forms, illocutionary force, perlocutionary effects, and cultural-contextual variations of directives in media. The analysis finds that English and Uzbek news share core directive strategies (such as urging or ordering), but differ in typical wording and level of directness due to cultural and linguistic norms.

KEYWORDS: Directive speech acts, commands and appeals, news discourse, illocutionary force, perlocutionary effect.

INTRODUCTION

In pragmatics, directive speech acts are communicative acts that aim to get someone to do something (or refrain from doing something). J.L. Austin's speech act theory first distinguished the illocutionary force (the intended action of an utterance) from its perlocutionary effect (its actual effect on the listener).

Directives – which include commands, orders, requests, appeals, and advice – have a particularly clear illocutionary point: as J. Searle famously defines, they are "attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something". In news discourse, directives appear when newsmakers (such as government officials, leaders, or organizations) issue commands or appeals that journalists then report to the public. For example, a news report might relay a president's command to implement a policy, or an official's appeal for calm. These reported directives are double-layered speech acts: the original illocution (the official's command/appeal) is embedded within the journalist's reporting context.

Understanding directive speech acts in news is important because news not only informs but also often aims to influence public behaviour or opinion through others' speech. How a command or appeal is framed in the media can affect its persuasiveness and the audience's reaction. Furthermore, cross-linguistic differences in expressing directives can pose challenges for translation and cross-cultural communication. This thesis focuses on English and Uzbek news discourse, offering a comparative look at how each language realises commands and appeals in media texts. Uzbek, a Turkic language, and English, a Germanic language, have distinct cultural and linguistic traditions, yet both use news as a medium for public directives. By examining real news examples alongside pragmatic theory (J.Austin's speech acts, J.Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts, P.Brown and S.Levinson's politeness theory, G.Yule's pragmatics

framework, etc.), we can discern patterns in form, force, and effect of directives in each language.

In journalistic practice, direct quotes or reported speech are used to convey a speaker's directive. English news typically uses verbs such as order, urge, call on, appeal, ask, advise, warn, or demand to characterize directives. Uzbek news, on the other hand, employs its own set of performative verbs and expressions, including buyurmoq (to order), chaqirmoq (to call upon, urge), murojaat qilmoq (to appeal or address), so'ramoq (to ask/request), talab qilmoq (to demand), ko'rsatma bermoq (to give an instruction), ogohlantirmoq (to warn), and tavsiya qilmoq (to recommend). These verbs explicitly carry the directive force, often functioning as speech act descriptors in the news report.

English example (Natural disaster news): Australia ordered thousands of people in its eastern regions to evacuate before Tropical Cyclone Alfred hits land on Saturday .

In this news item, the Australian government explicitly commands thousands of people to evacuate before an approaching tropical cyclone. The directive issued by the official authority carries a clear directive illocutionary force; it aims to compel the public to move to safe areas, thus eliciting specific actions. The linguistic structure "ordered … to evacuate" distinctly manifests the directive nature, directly expressing the government's illocutionary intent to initiate evacuation.

Uzbek example (Social life – local traffic safety news): Favqulodda vaziyatlar vazirligi haydovchilarni Qamchiq dovonidan o'tayotganda hushyor bo'lishga chaqirdi . // The Ministry of Emergency Situations called on drivers to remain vigilant while crossing the "Kamchik dovon".

Here, the Uzbek Ministry of Emergency Situations (Favqulodda vaziyatlar vazirligi) issues a cautionary appeal directed toward drivers due to adverse weather conditions. The expression "hushyor bo'lishga chaqirdi" aligns closely with the English phrase "urged drivers to be cautious". This is also a directive act with the illocutionary goal of recommending and simultaneously demanding that drivers take precautionary measures. Through this official appeal, the ministry expects citizens to adopt certain behaviours to prevent accidents or hazards. In the English example, the command is distinctly direct and authoritative, and "ordered to evacuate" is clearly and explicitly stated. In contrast, the Uzbek example employs a relatively softer communicative style, "hushyor bo'lishga chaqirdi" (called on drivers to remain vigilant), carrying a tone of recommendation and appeal. This difference highlights distinct communicative styles based on cultural and situational contexts: the English report conveys a strong governmental command issued under urgent emergency conditions (evacuation), whereas the Uzbek report presents a preventive measure in a more advisory tone (vigilance). Both examples demonstrate directive illocutionary acts; however, they differ semantically. The English sentence employs the verb "ordered", emphasizing strict authority, whereas the Uzbek sentence selects the verb "chaqirdi" (called on), reflecting a gentler approach. Nevertheless, semantically, both clearly indicate that the audience is expected to perform certain actions.

Context plays a crucial role in directive acts: in Australia, the government's evacuation order is a strict directive rooted in a socio-political context of emergency management, while in Uzbekistan, the appeal directed at drivers traversing a hazardous mountain pass represents a softer directive within a social safety context. During translation processes, these contextual considerations may necessitate allomorphic changes due to differences in politeness norms and

grammatical stylistics between languages. For instance, a literal Uzbek translation of the English directive "Australia ordered thousands to evacuate..." as "Avstraliya minglab odamlarni evakuatsiya qilishga buyurdi" accurately conveys the strict authoritative meaning (isomorphic equivalent). However, translating softer English directives such as "urge" or "advise" may require carefully selecting appropriate expressions in Uzbek, such as "chaqirmoq" (to call upon) or "so'ramoq" (to request). Translating the Uzbek example into English as "called on drivers to remain vigilant" is likewise accurate and contextually suitable.

Thus, when translating directive acts, maintaining illocutionary force while considering context and cultural nuances is essential. If the level of authority or politeness is altered in translation, it signals an allomorphic shift. Ideally, the original speaker's intention (prompting specific actions) should remain unchanged, signifying pragmatic isomorphism.

In news discourse, directive acts frequently function to ensure public safety and order, thus carrying potent illocutionary force and aiming for tangible societal impact.

Finally, we consider how different cultural expectations in speech acts (as noted by scholars like A. Wierzbicka) play out. A. Wierzbicka (1985) found that what counts as a polite or appropriate directive can vary by culture. English norms favour mitigating impositions – even authoritative appeals may include polite fiction. Uzbek communicative norms, while certainly employing politeness in interpersonal contexts, in news-political contexts lean towards clarity and authority. An English news headline might say "President Calls for Unity Amid Crisis" (using calls for, a gentle idiom), whereas an Uzbek headline might say "Prezident Inqiroz davrida birlikka chaqirdi" – literally the same ("called for unity"), showing a remarkable similarity in idiom. However, if the English headline were "President Demands Unity…", that would feel strong; similarly "birlikni talab qildi" in Uzbek would be a strong wording implying perhaps dissatisfaction that unity is lacking. The cultural nuance is in when each language chooses a softer vs. stronger term. Uzbek media, especially state media, may favour positive or neutral terms like chaqirdi (urged) and avoid saying buyurdi (ordered) to the public to avoid sounding draconian – unless it is about a direct order to officials. English media similarly balances between urged and ordered based on context.

In summary, context (crisis vs. routine, authority vs. requestor, audience relations) and culture (norms of politeness and authority) both influence the realization of directive speech acts in news. Both English and Uzbek have a repertoire of strategies to increase or decrease directness, and journalists select forms that fit the situation and audience expectations.

Translating news directives between English and Uzbek demands careful handling of illocutionary force and form. A literal translation may misrepresent the tone. For instance, an English sentence with a mild appeal – "The mayor appealed to residents to conserve water" – if translated word-for-word as "Hokim rezidentlarni suvni tejashga murojaat qildi" might sound slightly odd (Uzbek typically would use chaqirdi in that collocation or say murojaat qildi differently). A better Uzbek translation would be "Hokim aholini suvni tejab ishlatishga chaqirdi," using chaqirdi to correctly convey appealed/urged. Conversely, when translating Uzbek to English, one must choose the right verb: if an article says "chaqirdi", did it mean called on/urged or was it closer to ordered? Usually chaqirmoq in this context is urge, so one would not translate it as "called (them) to" without context – call on or urge is the idiomatic English. Similarly, buyurdi should be ordered, talab qildi is demanded, tavsiya qildi is recommended. The translator must also mind differences in syntactic structure. Uzbek often uses an infinitive

(verbal noun) + -ni with buyurdi/talab qildi, whereas English may use a that-clause or to-infinitive. For example: "... tekshiruv o'tkazishni buyurdi" can become "ordered that an investigation be carried out" or "ordered an investigation to be carried out." Choosing between these affects the tone: the that-clause is a bit more formal, the infinitive a bit more immediate. Finally, translators should maintain the contextual implications. If an English text says "It is advised that..." (passive impersonal), an Uzbek translation might need to choose between impersonal ("... tavsiya etiladi") or introducing an actor (e.g., "shifokorlar tavsiya qilmoqda" – doctors advise…). The choice can subtly alter how authoritative or personal the directive appears. Awareness of the source's intent (to gently advise or firmly instruct) is key. Misinterpreting a gentle appeal as a command, or vice versa, can lead to pragmatic translation errors, potentially skewing how readers perceive the urgency or obligation of the action. By aligning the illocutionary force and using equivalent conventional phrases (e.g., English "urged" = Uzbek chaqirdi, English "ordered" = Uzbek buyurdi, etc.), the translated news can accurately convey the original meaning and tone.

CONCLUSION

Directive speech acts in news discourse, whether commands or appeals, serve to convey crucial information about intended actions and influence on the audience. This comparative analysis of English and Uzbek news has shown that both languages employ a range of lexical and structural strategies to report directives: English leans on verbs like urge, order, appeal, advise, often embedding directives in subordinate clauses or modal frameworks, while Uzbek utilizes verbs such as chaqirmoq (urge/call), buyurmoq (order), talab qilmoq (demand), tavsiya qilmoq (recommend), frequently with complement clauses in the infinitival form. The illocutionary force in each case is carefully calibrated by journalists to fit the context, strong, explicit commands in urgent or authoritative contexts, versus softer appeals when persuasion is the goal. Perlocutionary effects, though not always directly stated, are implied through context and occasionally explicitly noted (e.g., warnings of consequences or follow-up actions).

The implications for translation underscore that one must translate meaning, not just words. A translator must recognize a directive's type and strength in the source text and choose a target expression that carries the same force. As we saw, translating ordered to buyurdi or chaqirdi to urged is usually straightforward, but one must also adjust for any shifts in directness or modality that the languages require.

In conclusion, the comparative perspective on English and Uzbek news discourse reveals that while the two languages have different grammatical and cultural lenses, they converge on the fundamental speech act principles outlined by theorists like Austin and Searle. A command is a command, an appeal is an appeal, but how they are wrapped in words can differ in interesting ways. By examining real news examples through a pragmatic framework, we gain insight into not only the mechanics of language but also the values and context that shape how we tell others what to do. This understanding can improve cross-cultural journalism and translation, ensuring that when news "speaks" in directives, it does so effectively and appropriately in any language.

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